Federal Administration Policy and Regulatory News

U.S. DOT Hosts Public Listening Summit on Automated Vehicle Policy

On March 1, 2018, the U.S. Department of Transportation hosted a Public Listening Summit on Automated Vehicle Policy that featured senior leadership from USDOT, state and local partners, industry, academia, and safety advocates. The event focused on key cross-modal issues important to the successful integration of automated vehicles into our nation's surface transportation system. The agenda can be found here. A link to the Webcast can be found here. In addition, a docket (Docket No. DOT-OST-2018-0017) is now open for stakeholders and the public to submit information.

As the Department works on Federal Automated Vehicle Policy (FAVP) 3.0, Derek Kan, Undersecretary for Transportation Policy, pointed out that USDOT is "not going to be selecting what [technology] should be used...[but will be] looking at ways to evaluate outcomes." Rather than saying that there must be "A, B and C in a vehicle', [USDOT would like] to look at how safe a vehicle is at the other end."

ITS America President and CEO Shailen Bhatt participated in a closed portion of the AV Summit. The following ITS America members participated in the public session of the summit: Board member Kevin Biesty, Deputy Director for Policy at Arizona DOT; Smart Infrastructure Chair Tina Quigley, General Manager of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada; and former Board Chair Kirk Steudle, Director of Michigan DOT.
Steudle astutely called for fewer silos and more collaboration. Quigley, after declaring “technology is the new asphalt,” urged investing in infrastructure and carving out dedicated funds for ITS and connectivity. Biesty noted that innovation thrives through collaboration, not through unnecessary regulation. He also made a plug for ITS America, noting it is a “great organization that helps bring the private and public sectors to the table.”

**ITS America Staff Meets with FCC on Spectrum Sharing**

ITS America staff met on February 16 with members of the Federal Communications Commission’s office of engineering and technology to discuss final disposition of the first phase of testing for spectrum sharing between V2X DSRC and Wi-Fi. ITS America shared a letter to the Secretary of Transportation from nearly 60 public agencies and private companies. ITS America plans to continue engaging with several commission members following release of its Phase 1 testing report.

**Legislative News**

**Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Kicks Off Hill Hearings on Trump Infrastructure Plan**

The U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held on March 1, 2018, the first congressional hearing on the Trump Administration’s Infrastructure Plan. U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao testified on the plan’s transportation infrastructure principles.

Chao stated that the President’s proposal would stimulate at least $1.5 trillion in infrastructure investment, which includes a minimum of $200 billion in direct Federal funding. “The guiding principles are to: 1) use Federal dollars as seed money to incentivize infrastructure investment; 2) provide for the needs of rural communities; 3) streamline permitting to speed up project delivery; and, 4) reduce unnecessary and overly burdensome regulations,” said Chao.

The question of how to pay for the $200 billion federal share continues to be the issue. In an exchange with Chao, Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) said that “The President has now said on a number of occasions that he does support an increase in the gas
tax to fund this $200 billion plan, and my question is very simple: Does the President mean what he says?" Chao responded by saying, "You should ask the White House." Van Hollen closed the exchange with Chao stating, "Even that $200 billion is right now a hallucination until we have a real funding source."

"On the Environment and Public Works Committee, we are making good bipartisan progress on legislation to address America's water infrastructure," said Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-WY). "We are working side-by-side on water infrastructure legislation that we plan to pass later this year. We need to expand that bipartisan cooperation to roads and bridges as well."

"As a former governor and state treasurer, I know that we can't go from an 80 percent federal share to a 20 percent share and somehow expect States that are already facing budget constraints budgets to pick up the slack," said Committee Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-DE). "That is a deal I imagine states – from Wyoming to Delaware – will be understandably reluctant to take."

Read more: U.S. Department of Transportation Elaine Chao's testimony

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso's (R-WY) opening statement

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Ranking Member Tom Carper's (D-DE) opening statement

ITS America Calls for an Infrastructure Bill that Prioritizes Investments in Intelligent Transportation Technologies

In anticipation of the Committee on Environment and Public Works hearing on the Trump Administration's infrastructure plan on March 1, 2018, ITS America President and CEO Shailen Bhatt sent a letter to the Committee urging that the infrastructure plan prioritize investment in intelligent transportation technologies.

"The nation is entering a technology revolution that will define the way people, goods, and services move for decades to come," Bhatt said. "We must deploy intelligent transportation technologies on a large scale to remain competitive in an increasingly global economy."

ITS America put forth six key recommendations:
• Leverage existing FAST Act programs: Increase funding for FAST Act programs. Intelligent transportation technologies, including vehicle-to-infrastructure, are eligible uses of most FAST Act highway program funds.

• Create grants for emerging technologies that support congestion relief: Provide new funding for intelligent transportation deployment activities that support congestion relief.

• Expand opportunities for smart communities: Build on the successes of the 2015 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Cities Challenge administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation by including new federal funding to expand opportunities for communities – large and small/urban and rural – to compete for resources that will fund innovative and sustainable smart transportation projects.

• Increase development of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure: Additional development of EV charging station corridors based on federal and state incentive projects as well as public private partnerships. Continue to look at new technologies such as inductive charging to speed the deployment of EVs.

• Develop additional opportunities for broadband deployment: Provide new federal funding for broadband in unserved areas—both rural and metropolitan—to support the deployment of intelligent transportation applications that depend on connectivity.

• Provide investments to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund and more resources for intelligent transportation technologies: Provide new and long-term investments to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund, increase federal funding for intelligent transportation technologies, and provide a multi-faceted approach to leveraging public and private resources.

"Our increasingly outmoded roads, bridges, transit, freight, and intercity passenger systems are struggling to move the nation’s technology-driven economy," Bhatt said. "We need an infrastructure bill that prioritizes investments in intelligent transportation technologies."

Read ITS America’s letter to the Committee on Environment and Public Works here.
House Hearing on Trump Infrastructure Plan: March 6, 2018

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will hold a hearing “Examining the Administration’s Infrastructure Proposal” on March 6, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. The witness list and hearing webcast will be available at https://transportation.house.gov/

Bicameral FCC Reauthorization Agreement Reached

As Policy Rundown heads to press, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD), Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL), House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR), and Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) announced on March 2, 2018, a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on legislation reauthorizing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). ITS America will provide an in-depth analysis of the agreement for the next issue of the Policy Rundown.

House Subcommittee to Examine the Future of Transportation Fuels: March 2, 2018

The Subcommittee on Environment of the Committee on Energy and Commerce will hold a hearing on March 7, 2018, at 10:15 a.m. entitled, "The Future of Transportation Fuels and Vehicles." The witness list and hearing webcast will be available at https://energycommerce.house.gov/news/

State and Local Policy

Michigan Legislature Approves Road Funding Bill Authorizing Up to $15 million for Next Generation Technologies and Ride-Sharing Pilot

On March 1, 2018, the Michigan Senate voted on HB 4321 and approved $175 million to fix the State’s roads. As part of that funding, the bill authorizes up to "$15.0 million for projects related to next generation technologies, hydrogen fueling stations, and service delivery including demonstration projects related to enhanced transportation services for senior citizens and

**Virginia Lawmakers Seek to Expand Tolling on New I-66 Express Lanes**

Some Virginia lawmakers reportedly believe that the new I-66 Express Lanes are unfair because the tolling is only applied to commuters traveling in peak direction and would like to expand the tolling to include all drivers. The Virginia House of Delegates recently passed a budget amendment requiring tolling in both directions by 2020. Given that the Virginia State Senate budget bill doesn’t include this proposal, its fate will be decided during the conference process.

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