

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Transportation
Sent: Fri 8/4/2017 2:06:21 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Transportation: Senate confirms DOT, DHS nominees before vamoosing — Sanctuary cities targeted — Get some rest before a hectic fall

By Stephanie Beasley and Brianna Gurciullo | 08/04/2017 10:00 AM EDT

DONEZO: You smell that, our loyal MT readers? That's the smell of lingering jet fumes in the air. The Senate confirmed more than 60 nominations Thursday afternoon - including David Pekoske to be TSA administrator, Mark Buzby to be MARAD administrator and Robert Sumwalt to be NTSB chairman - before lawmakers took off for recess.

Baptism by fire: Pekoske, previously vice commandant of the Coast Guard, will now be sworn in as the 13th administrator of the 16-year-old TSA. His confirmation by voice vote comes days after John Kelly left DHS to be White House chief of staff. As Steph reports for Pros, "Pekoske will likely work closely with Acting Secretary Elaine Duke to oversee implementation of a directive DHS issued in June ordering 180 airlines to work with partner airports around the globe to update security for flights to the United States."

Excluded from the en bloc confirmations? Steven Bradbury to be DOT general counsel and Ron Batory to be FRA administrator. Bradbury just squeaked out of committee on a party-line vote, with Democrats questioning his past work for Takata and his part in helping pen the so-called torture memos during the George W. Bush administration. The nominations of Bradbury and Batory - as well as Derek Kan, to be undersecretary of Transportation for policy, and Adam Sullivan, to be assistant secretary for governmental affairs - will have to wait until after recess.

Also of note: The Senate on Thursday confirmed Kay Bailey Hutchison to be the United States' ambassador to NATO. A former senator from Texas, Hutchison served for years on the Senate Commerce Committee.

GOTTA GET DOWN ON FRIDAY: Thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Morning Transportation, your daily tipsheet on all things trains, planes, automobiles and ports. We at MT wish you a happy weekend. But before you duck out of the office today, please send along tips, feedback and lyrics to sbeasley@politico.com or [@Steph_Beasley](https://twitter.com/Steph_Beasley) and bgurciullo@politico.com or [@brigurciullo](https://twitter.com/brigurciullo).

"Hitchhiker, praying to the headlights / You don't slow down, not this night / Cactus shadows, in the blue moonlight / Let's not get fooled, fool, with view high in sight / Dessert has oh no night / First things first she sighed / Shut up and drive." (h/t Michael Sievers at Hunton & Williams)

GET LISTENING: Follow MT's playlist on Spotify. What better way to start your day than with tunes (picked by us and readers) that are all about flying, driving, commuting and sailing?

TWEET DU JOUR: From POLITICO's Jake Sherman: "Kelly has totally changed trump. Much more disciplined, tighter etc." (Jake was referring to this tweet from President Donald Trump: "Our relationship with Russia is at an all-time & very dangerous low. You can thank Congress,

the same people that can't even give us HCare!")

SAFETRACK SOUNDTRACK: On WAMU's The Kojo Nnamdi Show, musician Jason Mendelson talked about his years-long mission to write a song for every station in Washington's Metrorail system. Although, he confessed that he hasn't been to all 91 stations yet. Listen [here](#).

SANCTUARY CITIES TARGETED: Republican Sens. [John Cornyn](#) of Texas, [John Barrasso](#) of Wyoming, [Ron Johnson](#) of Wisconsin and [Thom Tillis](#) of North Carolina introduced legislation that would block sanctuary cities from receiving federal funds if they don't comply with federal immigration enforcement requests. The lawmakers said the bill would take a "zero tolerance" approach to immigrants who commit crimes or violate immigration laws, in an effort to increase public safety. The legislation also proposes to allocate \$15 billion to tighten security at the U.S.-Mexico border, but none of it would go toward fulfilling Trump's campaign promise to build a standalone border wall, POLITICO's Seung Min Kim and Ted Hesson [write](#).

MORE, MORE, MORE: It's been 10 years since a law [H.R. 1 \(P.L.110-53\)](#) was enacted mandating that DHS adopt 9/11 Commission recommendations to improve national security, but the department is still lagging behind when it comes to tracking travelers' arrivals to and departures from the country and checking cargo entering U.S. ports, according to Rep. [Bennie Thompson](#) (D-Miss.). "We still do not have a biometric exit system though the department has a pilot underway," he said in a statement Thursday. CBP also is still allowing maritime cargo to enter the country without scanning all materials, including those that could pose nuclear threats, he added. Thompson, who was chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee when the bill passed the chamber, urged the Trump administration to prioritize those issues and make sure that the legislation was fully enacted "as soon as possible."

ALL THE DEADLINES: The infrastructure initiative Trump promised during the campaign is likely to be idling until late autumn, at the earliest. Rep. [Mark Meadows](#) (R-N.C.) thinks Congress needs to send a bill overhauling the tax code to the White House by Thanksgiving. That's what the House Freedom Caucus chairman said Thursday at an Americans for Prosperity event, Aaron Lorenzo [reports](#) for Pro Tax. The White House is operating under the optimistic assumption that a tax overhaul will pass the House in October and the Senate will follow up in November, which would give lawmakers about a month to turn to Trump's third priority for 2017: an infrastructure bill.

THEN THERE'S THE MUST-PASS BILLS: The House and Senate will both be in session for only a few days before fiscal 2017 ends, as Pro Day Ahead [notes](#). In that time, lawmakers will not only need to re-up the FAA's authorization, but also increase the debt ceiling, a debate that stands to tear apart Republicans. "The upshot: Congress will return next month from August recess with no clear road map for avoiding the first-ever default on the nation's debt," POLITICO's Seung Min Kim and Rachael Bade [report](#). On top of that, Congress will need to pass a spending bill before the government shuts down at the end of September.

BACK IN THE DAY: Robotics engineers and former government officials sat down with [Wired Magazine](#) to reminisce about what it was like to participate in what sounds like a pretty epic 142-mile self-driving vehicle race sponsored by the Pentagon. Despite offering a \$1 million

prize to the winner of the 2004 Grand Challenge in the Mojave Desert, Tony Tether, then director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, said he didn't expect more than 10 people to show up. But on the day of the race, the grounds "teemed with sweaty, stressed, sleep-deprived geeks, desperately tinkering with their motley assortment of driverless Frankencars," Alex Davies writes of the race that is now considered a launching pad for the self-driving car industry.

SHIFTING GEARS: Nicole Hager is leaving Sen. [Jim Inhofe's](#) (R-Okla.) office, where she has served as deputy press secretary, to take the same position for the Senate Finance Committee beginning Aug. 21. Hager's last day with Inhofe, for whom she has worked since 2015, was Thursday. In an email to colleagues, she said she will also attend The George Washington University Law School.

THE AUTOBAHN:

- "CSX pains lead to Norfolk Southern gains." [The Virginian-Pilot](#).
- "Toyota to build \$1.6 billion U.S. plant with rival Mazda: source." [Reuters](#).
- "Linking public works to local hiring faces a Trump challenge." [The New York Times](#).
- "NTSB arrives at scene of deadly Minneapolis school explosion." [NBC News](#).
- "U.S. judge voids World Trade Center contractor's fraud conviction." [Reuters](#).
- "Smoke, then fire: Uber knowingly leased unsafe cars to drivers." [The Wall Street Journal](#).
- "More than 1 in 5 travelers knowingly or unknowingly carried prohibited items onto aircraft, survey finds." [The Washington Post](#).
- "This summer, PATH, New York's puny train, is on the big stage." [The New York Times](#).

THE COUNTDOWN: DOT appropriations run out in 57 days. The FAA reauthorization expires in 57 days. Highway and transit policy is up for renewal in 1,153 days.

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