

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Transportation
Sent: Mon 11/27/2017 3:04:11 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Transportation: TSA gets through Thanksgiving weekend without any major glitches — Lawmakers huddle this week on appropriations — Could infrastructure still make its way into the tax plan?

By Tanya Snyder | 11/27/2017 10:02 AM EDT

With help from Stephanie Beasley

SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE TIFIA LOANS: Marty Klepper resigned his post at the helm of DOT's Build America Bureau last month, pleased with all he'd been able to accomplish but frustrated by a slew of mixed messages from the administration and Congress on infrastructure. There's the cognitive dissonance created when an administration that's supposedly planning a major infusion of cash for infrastructure proposes to cut funding for infrastructure programs. Plus, the House tax bill seeks to eliminate the tax break for private activity bonds (which the administration has previously said it planned to expand). And who could forget Trump's bewildering statement that public-private partnerships are "more trouble than they're worth?" But worst of all is that the promised infrastructure initiative itself "appears to be stalled and the future is uncertain," he said. Klepper was tapped by the Obama administration in its waning days to take over the newborn Build America Bureau, created as a one-stop shop for federal infrastructure financing programs, but had been excited by the incoming Trump administration's apparent commitment to a \$1 trillion infrastructure initiative, he told POLITICO in an interview.

KEEP HOPE ALIVE: With less than two weeks to strike a deal to continue funding the federal government, President Donald Trump and top congressional leaders will meet Tuesday afternoon "to try to hammer out a year-end agreement to avert a government shutdown," report Seung Min Kim, Heather Caygle and Andrew Restuccia. Democrats and Republicans have yet to agree on total government spending levels, much less actual appropriations for the rest of the fiscal year. "That means a short-term funding extension to keep the government operating beyond a Dec. 8 deadline is all but inevitable," the trio write. Remember: Republicans are also trying to pass their tax overhaul by Christmas, and Democrats are still trying to force a DACA fix into any short-term continuing resolution.

KEEP HOPE ALIVE PART II: The Senate GOP's third-in-command, Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), told "Fox News Sunday" that he expected the tax bill to undergo significant changes as it proceeds through "an open process on the floor of the United States Senate, where people can offer amendments... so, there [will] be plenty of opportunities to change the bill in the direction that some of our senators want to see." Could that include an amendment directing a revenue stream toward infrastructure, or a change to the gas tax? We'll be watching this week as the Senate takes up the bill.

IT'S JUST ANOTHER MANIC MONDAY: Thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Morning Transportation, your daily tipsheet on all things trains, planes, automobiles and ports. Tanya is your pilot. Send tips, feedback and song lyrics to tsnyder@politico.com or @TSnyderDC.

"Have to catch an early train / Got to be to work by nine / And if I had an aeroplane / I still couldn't make it on time."

GET LISTENING: Follow MT's [playlist](#) on Spotify. What better way to start your day than with songs (picked by us and readers) about lonely highways and south-bound trains?

WOMEN RULE WEEK! POLITICO is partnering with women-led businesses in the DC-metro area to offer a full week of exclusive perks in conjunction with the 5th annual Women Rule Summit! Join the fun at participating businesses during Women Rule Week (**Nov. 27 - Dec. 1**) for [exclusive deals](#) and tweet 5x using #WomenRule for a chance to win two free tickets to the Summit on Dec. 5!

THIS WEEK:

Tuesday - The National Transportation Safety Board holds a [meeting](#) on a July 2016 crash involving a semi-truck and a bus near St. Marks, Fla. The House Homeland Security Committee's Transportation and Protective Security Subcommittee holds a [field hearing](#) on "Securing Public Areas of Transportation Systems: Stakeholder Perspectives."

Wednesday - House Transportation Committee's Aviation Subcommittee holds a [hearing](#) on "Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Emerging Uses in a Changing National Airspace." The Committee on Small Business will meet for a [hearing](#) titled, "Highway to Headache: Federal Regulations on the Small Trucking Industry." The Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems will host a [webinar](#) to outline the necessary steps to become a commercial drone pilot and discuss how companies can use drones to improve their business.

Thursday - House Homeland Security Committee holds a [hearing](#) on "World Wide Threats: Keeping America Secure in the New Age of Terror."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL: TSA pulled through the busy holiday without a major hitch. As we reported last week, TSA chief David Pekoske predicted that air travelers could experience slightly longer wait times at security checkpoints due to the collision of high travel volumes and the agency's ongoing implementation of a new rule requiring passengers to remove large electronics from carry-on bags. TSA is expected to release official wait times statistics today, but, so far, Pekoske's assessment appears to have been spot on. Based on anecdotal reports, travelers saw the longest lines on [Wednesday](#) and [Sunday](#), but nothing catastrophic. There was [one headline-grabbing hold up](#) at Denver International Airport, but it was caused by malfunctioning airport trains, not TSA.

Doesn't mean you didn't get delayed, though: CNN [reported](#) that at least 2,019 flights were delayed and 46 flights were canceled at major airports across the United States on Wednesday. Roads were busy on Sunday, but according to [Jalopnik's analysis](#) of Thanksgiving travel trends, Sunday's traffic is never as bad as Wednesday's. AAA [was predicting](#) the highest Thanksgiving travel volumes in 12 years across all modes of travel.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENDEZVOUS: The nonprofit Food and Water Watch group is suing the Trump administration for allegedly operating its infrastructure council in the dark well before it was formally established in violation of transparency laws. As Lauren Gardner reports, the group charges that the council "met on numerous occasions" to advise White House officials on infrastructure policy within the first two months of the administration - well before the White House issued an executive order creating it in July. That means the council could have had influence over the drafting of the administration's infrastructure principles without being subject to public scrutiny required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Depends what the definition of the word 'is' is: "The administration has moved to dismiss the case by arguing that the infrastructure council never existed; in response, earlier this week the organization amended its complaint," Lauren writes. "The White House put the brakes on the council in August, after the business world revolted over Trump's comments about a white supremacist protest in Charlottesville, Virginia."

MORE EGG ON UBER'S FACE: While you were stuffing the turkey Thursday, news broke that Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi knew about the data breach since mid-September, and former CEO and founder Travis Kalanick found out about it in November 2016, a month after it took place. They didn't disclose it to customers until last Tuesday. Though the breach isn't the biggest one in recent memory, lawmakers were taken aback to learn of the measures Uber took to cover it up, including a \$100,000 payoff to the hackers. Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), the ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, is calling for Uber to testify before the committee.

The big bucks: POLITICO Influence reports that Uber spent \$510,000 on lobbying in the third quarter, its highest-ever total, retaining eight firms, though it's not clear whether any of them were working on data security issues. "Uber may decide to bolster its team in Washington if Congress does decide to hold hearings," PI's Theodoric Meyer reports. "When Congress hauled in Richard Smith, the former chief executive of Equifax, to testify last month after a massive data breach, Equifax brought on DLA Piper to help with the response. Former Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.), who's now at DLA Piper but wasn't listed on the Equifax lobbying registration, could be seen advising Smith as he testified."

WHEELS ON WINGS: Paralyzed Veterans of America, which is suing DOT over its rollback on a rule increasing accountability for airlines that lose or damage passengers' wheelchairs, took advantage of the busy travel weekend to again urge DOT to revert to the original deadline for airlines to start reporting wheelchair damage or delays. "This must be the last Thanksgiving that airline travelers with disabilities will have to fly without knowing this critical information," said the group's president, David Zurfluh.

Remember when: The Trump administration delayed the rule's implementation by a year in March. In April, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) - herself a veteran who lost both legs in Iraq - asked Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao to explain the delay. And the next day, Duckworth boarded a flight and had another wheelchair broken. "It was equivalent to them taking my legs away from me," she told POLITICO at the time.

CONGRATULATIONS... and Happy Birthday, and Happy Thanksgiving while we're at it, to Max Slutsky, special adviser to FAA Administrator Michael Huerta, who had an appropriately aviation-themed life milestone Wednesday when he proposed to his girlfriend, Emily Kaplan of the Glover Park Group, as she stepped off her flight at LaGuardia Airport. (She said yes.) Slutsky turned 30 the next day, on Thanksgiving. We hope the rest of the weekend was as awesome as the beginning.

THE AUTOBAHN:

- Coast Guard shooed more than 1,200 boats away from Mar-a-Lago during Trump's 2017 stays. [Palm Beach Post](#).
- SVU subs airline industry for Hollywood Harvey Weinstein-themed episode. [Hollywood Reporter](#).
- "Are robots better pilots? NASA pits human pilot vs. AI and here's what happened." [Tech Times](#).
- "Traversing larger boundaries: the ever expanding reach of regional aircraft." [Airline Geeks](#).
- "Blast in Chinese port city kills at least 2, injures 30." [Fox News](#).
- "Thune's war chest is so full, his money makes money." [Rapid City Journal](#).
- "Terror threat to US rail puts law enforcement on alert." [ABC News](#).
- "Trump's missing infrastructure plan." [Axios](#).
- "Thanksgiving travel back home busting records." [ABC Action News](#).

THE COUNTDOWN: DOT appropriations run out in 12 days. The FAA reauthorization expires in 125 days. Highway and transit policy is up for renewal in 1,039 days.

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-transportation/2017/11/27/tsa-gets-through-thanksgiving-weekend-without-any-major-glitches-032000>

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