

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Transportation
Sent: Thur 11/9/2017 3:04:44 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Transportation, presented by the Association of American Railroads: A 'hair-raising' TSA investigation — Crackdown on Cuba travel — Transpo highlights from Election 2017

By Tanya Snyder and Stephanie Beasley | 11/09/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Brianna Gurciullo

'DISTURBING': Following a DHS inspector general briefing on baggage screening vulnerabilities, House Homeland Security Committee Chairman [Michael McCaul](#) (R-Texas) said TSA needs to get new computed tomography screening machines in all U.S. airports - ASAP, Stephanie Beasley [writes](#). McCaul, who called the briefing "disturbing," urged committee members to keep details from the IG report classified but said it included a total of eight recommendations that he hoped TSA would quickly adopt. (TSA later agreed with the recommendations said it's "committed to aggressively implementing" them.)

Thompson: Almost doesn't count: Top committee Democrat [Bennie Thompson](#) (Miss.) told POLITICO that he found the IG report "hair-raising" and that it did not appear TSA screenings had improved greatly since a 2015 IG audit showing screeners failed 95 percent of covert tests. Thompson said the IG's findings re-energized his desire to stop the diversion of more than \$1 billion annually in TSA security fees for deficit reduction. However, he acknowledged his previous attempts to move a proposal through the House tanked due to a lack of GOP support.

On the sunny side of the street: TSA Administrator David Pekoske [told reporters](#) after the hearing that TSA would focus on providing additional workforce training and developing a host of new technologies, including CT scanners, biometrics and automated screening lanes.

IT'S THURSDAY: Thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Morning Transportation, your daily tipsheet on all things trains, planes, automobiles and ports. Tanya steering the ship this week. Send your tips, complaints and fashion advice to tsnyder@politico.com or [@TSnyderDC](https://twitter.com/TSnyderDC).

"It was out at the crossroads down round Willow bank / Seen a Buick with Ohio plates behind the wheel was Frank / Well I chased him through them county roads till a sign said Canadian border 5 miles from here / I pulled over the side of the highway and watched his taillights disappear."

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

[GUIDE TO TAX REFORM] Easily understand and explain tax reform. Tax reform is complicated, to say the least. Download POLITICO Pro's Guide to Tax Reform and become an expert. Includes six tax-related infographics. [GET YOUR GUIDE TO TAX REFORM.](#)

YOU KAN DO IT: The Senate is expected to hold a procedural vote midday today on Derek Kan's nomination to be DOT undersecretary for policy, with a confirmation vote likely to follow

Monday evening. Kan is a former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. He has been serving as an adviser at DOT since June, when he left his job as the general manager of Lyft. Kan also previously served on Amtrak's board of directors.

BRING 'EM OUT: New rules for Americans traveling to Cuba go into effect today. The highlights: No more "people-to-people" travel except through an organization (with a representative present). The administration put new limitations on some types of educational travel and travel in "support for the Cuban people." The Miami Herald has a thorough breakdown here. Both Airlines for America and Cruise Lines International Association told MT that they and their members are digesting the new regs.

HE SAID, SHE SAID: Republicans in both chambers, amid loud rhetoric about the inadequacy of the Cuban security regime, have been pushing legislation that, among other things, would require TSA to audit all 10 Cuban airports operating flights to the United States. But here's the thing: TSA says it's already doing that. TSA inspectors have visited Cuba several times since regularly scheduled U.S.-Cuba flights resumed last year. New York Republican John Katko, who sponsored the House version of the bill (H.R. 3328 (115)) and was part of a House delegation denied visas to visit Cuba last year to inspect their security, responded to TSA's report: "My thoughts are, it's not enough," he said. Pros get all the details here.

BALLOT DANCE: Tuesday wasn't just a good night for Democrats - it was a good night for transportation ballot measures. Seven were approved with just one being rejected by voters. In Denver, a \$431 million general obligation bond for surface transportation was approved 73 percent to 27 percent. Athens-Clarke County, Ga., approved a new one-cent sales and use tax and \$95 million bond issuance for transportation, 74 percent to 26 percent. Only Allen County, Ohio, went against the grain, turning down a .025 percent sales and use tax for the Regional Transit Authority. (h/t Jeff Davis, Eno Transportation Weekly)

LOBIONDO-N'T KNOW: Rep. Frank LoBiondo will retire in 2019, but he can't say what he'll do after his last day in Congress. "I have no idea. Have not talked to anybody. Have not looked at anything," he told Brianna on Wednesday. The New Jersey Republican said he arrived at the decision to retire "very quickly."

**** A message from Association of American Railroads:** Moving 54 tons of goods annually for every American takes a lot of muscle, and a lot teamwork. See how intermodal has turned trucks and trains from competitors into collaborators while delivering for U.S. industry and consumers. <http://bit.ly/2itLz6q> **

PARTY LINES: Raymond Martinez got the nod from the Senate Commerce Committee Wednesday to lead FMCSA - but that was the easy part. Bruce Landsberg's nomination for NTSB's board and former Rep. Leon "Lynn" Westmoreland's nomination to the Amtrak board of directors were done by voice vote, though most Democrats were on record opposing one or both. Diana Furchtgott-Roth, nominee to lead research and technology at DOT, moved forward 14-13 split along party lines - no surprise considering the beating she took from Dems at her nomination hearing.

RPC ON ATC: The Senate Republican Policy Committee Wednesday sent out a primer for members on the House's proposal to separate air traffic control from the FAA. Called "NextGen Delayed, Just Like Your Plane," the [policy paper](#) focuses on delays in rolling out the FAA's NextGen program and other arguments that the FAA isn't right for the job. The paper also notes the concerns of general aviation, small airports and Captain "Sully" Sullenberger, and says that a move to spin off the FAA's air traffic control functions would "almost definitely" be met with a constitutional challenge.

Curious: Senate Republicans - especially those on the Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over aviation -- have been distinctly uninterested in taking up any large-scale air traffic control overhaul. So the policy paper's bent in favor of the plan is curious, as is the timing, since debate over the bill ([H.R. 2997 \(115\)](#)) went dormant after Congress passed a six-month FAA extension in late September. A Senate Republican source says the document is meant to give members an overview of the issue, in case they're asked about it by constituents or industry - not to sway members one way or another.

STICK TO THE RULES: Fifty-one Democrats (and Dem-leaning Independents), led by Sen. [Ben Cardin](#) (D-Md.) and Rep. [Earl Blumenauer](#) (D-Ore.), sent a [letter](#) Wednesday to DOT Secretary Elaine Chao, expressing their dismay at DOT's proposed rule repealing the greenhouse gas emissions rule, which allows state and local transportation agencies to track vehicle emissions on the National Highway System and set goals for reducing them. The lawmakers note in the letter that the transportation sector is responsible for nearly 30 percent of U.S. emissions.

ATRI-ED AND TRUE METHOD: The American Transportation Research Institute released its [recommendations](#) for funding the nation's transportation infrastructure: namely, a gas tax increase, which they call "the only meaningful mechanism" for realizing Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure dream. They say mileage-based user fees and tolling won't cut it, but do support a new federal vehicle registration fee "to fill funding gaps associated with electric vehicle use."

SAFE AND SOUND: Securing America's Future Energy (SAFE) has some ideas for making trucking more fuel-efficient, starting with performance-based standards for commercial vehicles. In the interim, they want Congress to authorize the use of twin 33-foot trailers - a controversial issue. Read the rest [here](#).

MT MAILBAG: The National Governors' Association and a host of other state and local groups sent a [letter](#) to Senate Commerce Committee leaders expressing their "deep appreciation" for the approach they took in their self-driving car bill ([S. 1885 \(115\)](#)) to balancing state and federal responsibilities.

THE AUTOBAHN:

- "Uber in deal with NASA to build flying taxi air control software." [Reuters](#).
- Via launch on-demand public transit system as alternative to bus service in two U.S. cities. [Via](#).
- "Construction Industry Pushes Back Against GOP Tax Reform Provisions." [For Construction](#)

Pros.

- "The future of in-flight entertainment may include gyms." The New York Post.
- "House panel declines to restore infrastructure financing tool in GOP tax bill." The Hill.
- "Federal drone advisory panel knocked for 'lack of transparency and poor management.'" The Washington Post.
- "A self-driving shuttle in Las Vegas got into an accident on its first day of service." The Verge.

THE COUNTDOWN: DOT appropriations run out in 30 days. The FAA reauthorization expires in 143 days. Highway and transit policy is up for renewal in 1,057 days.

**** A message from Association of American Railroads:** America's 21st century economy rides on the back of a modern intermodal freight rail network. Railroads are leveraging their unique shipping capabilities to meet growing demand for freight movement while supporting a trucking industry undergoing transformation. Read the full story of these two unlikely partners - and their impact on the American economy. <http://bit.ly/2itMnIu> **

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