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From: Morning Transportation
Sent: Wed 12/6/2017 3:03:39 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Transportation: Chao: Infrastructure next year — PreCheck and Global Entry could merge — ELD rumblings grow

By Tanya Snyder | 12/06/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Stephanie Beasley

2018 IS WHERE IT'S AT: The new ETA for the Trump administration's infrastructure package is early January, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said Tuesday. "You're going to see it, just not at the original timeframe," Chao said at a POLITICO event, noting that the administration can't control the legislative calendar. (A brief history lesson: President Donald Trump said during his campaign that he would release an infrastructure package in his first 100 days. Then it slipped to May, then to the fall, then after the tax bill and recently other priorities seem to be creeping up too, including a health care rematch and changes to the welfare system.)

#ChaoToo: Chao also said she's had her own #MeToo moment and that the perpetrator is "still here." She wouldn't say more and in fact advised survivors from against going public with such experiences: "It's not worth my while to go back and revisit those negative moments," she said. "It's too corrosive, it's too negative and it does you a double injury because it holds you back." Get the full story and check out all the highlights from POLITICO's Women Rule Summit here.

Reality check: Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said Chao's infrastructure timeline seems realistic to him and said he's working closely "with the administration as well as both sides of the aisle to move in that direction." He wouldn't give a specific timeline for the infrastructure bill that he's been crafting for months.

IT'S WEDNESDAY: Thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Morning Transportation, your daily tipsheet on all things trains, planes, automobiles and ships. Tanya is in the MT cockpit. Send tips, feedback and song lyrics to tsnyder@politico.com or @TSnyderDC.

"And she'll have fun fun fun / 'Til her daddy takes the T-bird away."

LISTEN HERE: 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?

NIELSEN TAKES OVER: The Senate confirmed Kirstjen Nielsen Tuesday to head the Homeland Security Department with a 62-37 vote Tuesday that mostly fell along party lines, though Democrats who voted yes included Bill Nelson (Fla.) and Joe Manchin (W. Va.).

YOUR DAILY SHUTDOWN BAROMETER: The House is planning a Thursday vote on a two-week appropriations patch to avoid a government shutdown before the Friday deadline. But Republicans are still fighting amongst themselves about whether it should last until Dec. 22 or Dec. 30, and GOP leaders are promising they won't cut deals with Democrats on immigration or anything else. Meanwhile, Trump's meeting with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-

N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is still on for Thursday.

IN OTHER NEWS: The House voted Monday night to go to conference with the Senate over the tax bill, and McConnell pledged Tuesday that the Senate would take action later in the week.

IT'S COMPLICATED: Tax reform could cast a shadow on an otherwise rosy outlook for infrastructure in 2018, according to the latest outlook report from Fitch Ratings. While the GOP's proposed overhaul would "increase costs for capital improvements for U.S. transportation assets in the near term and may limit issuer options," said Cherian George, the group's managing director, "it would deepen the pool by opening up investments to a larger investor base."

TSA/CBP MULL 'TRUSTED TRAVELER' MERGER: With just over 100 days on the job, TSA chief David Pekoske signaled that he's already thinking big. Pekoske told an audience at an aviation security summit Tuesday that he and Customs and Border Protection Acting Administrator Kevin McAleenan have begun discussing a possible consolidation of TSA's PreCheck and CBP's Global Entry programs. "I don't know whether we're going to be able to do that or not," he told POLITICO. "It's something that we looked at and we said, 'hey, let's at least take a look at this to see if it is feasible.'" Pekoske said it would simplify the process for travelers if there was just one vetting program that they had to register for to gain expedited service at airport security checkpoints.

It may not be optional: Such a merger would be mandatory if a Senate Commerce Committee-approved TSA reauthorization (S. 1872 (115)) is enacted. Under the bill, TSA and CBP would be required to examine how to "streamline and integrate the requirements and operations of such programs to reduce administrative burdens" and allow the public to access both programs through one online portal.

COMING SOON: Pekoske also said TSA is on track to begin deploying the computed tomography scanners to airports in late 2018, Stephanie reports. But it could take several years to complete the process of replacing all of the 2D X-ray machines at U.S. airports with new CT scanners, he said. "That will be several years in the future," he said before adding that "not all airports can handle the CT technology from a space and weight perspective."

STICKY WICKER?: Eno Transportation Weekly broke the news Monday evening that Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) was responsible for a Republican hold on the autonomous car bill (S. 1885 (115)). However, he's still being coy about it. "I might want to make a statement about that at some point but not right now," he told reporters Tuesday. Scuttlebutt suggests it could have something to do with auto dealers, who could face major disruptions if driverless cars are rolled out in shared fleets, as expected, rather than for private ownership.

'Cautiously optimistic': Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) said Tuesday that despite concerns raised by both Republicans and Democrats, "they're things that we think we can work through" and that he's still "cautiously optimistic" that the bill can pass before year's end.

RUMBLINGS GROW LOUDER AGAINST ELD IMPLEMENTATION: As the Dec. 18 deadline for trucks to install electronic logging devices gets closer, the opposition to the mandate

from small truck drivers is growing louder. Truck drivers held protests Monday in more than 40 locations across the country, and Tuesday, a bipartisan group of 20 senators wrote to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer expressing support for a provision in the House-passed THUD appropriations bill delaying the deadline in order to give FMCSA time to adjust the rules for livestock haulers.

HOLIDAY TRAVEL CRYSTAL BALL: Airlines for America is projecting that 51 million passengers will fly globally on U.S. airlines over the winter holiday, a 3.5 percent increase over last year's number.

YOUR FLIGHT IS DELAYED. BUT WHY? In the seventh installment of its Aviation Insights series, the Eno Center for Transportation asks the question, "What do we know about aircraft delays?" The answer: not much. Scheduling and reporting data lack transparency and granularity, they say. What we do know is that 81 percent of domestic flights are reported on-time -- the same as in 2003.

RAA ASKS FAA FOR NEW TRAINING PATHWAYS: The Regional Airline Association, which supports efforts to overhaul the 1,500 flight hour training rule for pilots, is urging the FAA to approve new "safety-enhancing structured training pathways" for airline first officers. In comments submitted as part of DOT's regulatory review, RAA asked DOT to approve more pathways as a way of addressing the pilot shortage, which, they say, has caused the regional airline industry to contract. RAA says FAA already has the existing authority to approve new flight training protocols but also supports GOP Commerce Committee legislation that would make that authority clear in statute.

FORGET I WAS EVER HERE: International consumer and privacy groups sent joint letters to automakers and car rental companies Tuesday, calling on them to ensure drivers and passengers that the data collected during their car rental is private. The groups want car rental and car-share companies to delete driver and passenger information when drivers return cars, explain to consumers how they can delete their own data, and only process personal data "with driver/passenger unambiguous consent, or if strictly necessary for the delivery of the service." The letters were based on a report one of the groups, Privacy International, recently released.

THE AUTOBAHN:

- "US issues travel warning for Jerusalem's Old City, West Bank amid embassy dispute." The Hill.
- "German pilots ground 222 flights after refusing to deport asylum seekers." The Independent.
- NGO details automakers' history of undercutting rules on safety and the environment. Union of Concerned Scientists.
- "New Jersey considers barring operating a drone while drunk." The Morning Call.
- "'All-you-can-fly' airline begins accepting Bitcoin and Ether." Coindesk.

- "How will autonomous vehicles change the way architects think about cities?" [The Architect's Newspaper](#).

- "Fuel still a wild card for airline profitability." [Gulf News](#).

- "Which sectors are benefiting from the autonomous vehicle industry?" [TechWire Asia](#).

THE COUNTDOWN: DOT appropriations run out in 3 days. The FAA reauthorization expires in 116 days. Highway and transit policy is up for renewal in 1,030 days.

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-transportation/2017/12/06/chao-predicts-infrastructure-initiative-launch-in-january-041647>

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