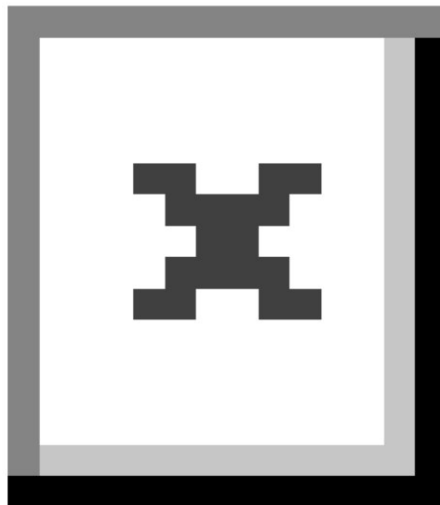




BY SAM OGOZALEK AND CHRIS MARQUETTE

With help from Oriana Pawlyk

QUICK FIX

— **The House Transportation Committee is poised to mark up** its segment of the GOP's reconciliation package in late April.

— **President Donald Trump floated the idea** of a temporary reprieve on auto tariffs.

— **T&I's top Democrat is seeking answers from DOT and DHS** about a spate of false cockpit alarms near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport that he says was due to Secret Service counter-drone technology.

IT'S TUESDAY: You're reading Morning Transportation, your Washington policy guide to everything that moves. We're glad you're here. Send tips, feedback and song lyrics to Sam at sogozalek@politico.com, Chris at cmarquette@politico.com and Oriana at opawlyk@politico.com and follow us at [@SamOgozalek](https://twitter.com/SamOgozalek), [@ChrisMarquette](https://twitter.com/ChrisMarquette) and [@Oriana0214](https://twitter.com/Oriana0214).

"We used to listen to the radio/ And sing along with every song we know/ We said someday we'd find out how it feels/ To sing to more than just the steering wheel."

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DRIVING THE DAY

MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDARS: The House Transportation Committee is scheduled to mark up its portion of the Republican reconciliation package on April 30, the week after Congress' Easter and Passover recess, a person with direct knowledge of T&I's plans told Chris.

— **The panel is expected to find about \$10 billion in net savings** from programs under its jurisdiction, just a small fraction of the \$1.5 trillion that conservatives are seeking during the process, which allows them to skirt a Democratic filibuster in the Senate. (As MT readers will know, the committee was

initially looking to save up to \$25 billion, but was asked to give more than \$16 billion to the Coast Guard for border security.)

WHAT'S TOP OF MIND?: T&I Chair Sam Graves (R-Mo.) has mulled imposing a \$150 yearly fee for electric vehicles to pay into the Highway Trust Fund. His team estimates that could bring in between \$20 billion and \$40 billion over a decade.

TRADE

A CARVE-OUT FOR AUTOS?: Talking to reporters Monday in the Oval Office, President Donald Trump floated temporary exceptions on tariffs to help car companies looking to shift manufacturing operations to the U.S. A POLITICO team notes his remarks in a sweeping story about his trade war with China.

— **An auto industry lobbyist, granted anonymity to discuss a sensitive issue,** said Trump is “probably referring to a transition period of lower tariffs to facilitate onshoring, and in some cases — like flat screens in cars — they are only made in China, Japan and Taiwan.”

AVIATION

SEEKING CLARITY ON WARNINGS: Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.), T&I's top Democrat, and Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), ranking member of the House Homeland Security Committee, in a letter Monday to DOT Secretary Sean Duffy and DHS chief Kristi Noem sought a briefing no later than April 21 on an incident last month in which improper testing of counter-drone equipment triggered cockpit alarms in several planes on approach to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, according to Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who initially described the situation at a recent hearing. Cruz laid blame on the Secret Service, which later downplayed his comments, and the Navy, which said it was looking into the matter.

GLEANNING FRESH DETAILS: In Larsen and Thompson's letter, the lawmakers said that during the first week of March, a series of automated warnings to pilots “incorrectly recommended ten resolution advisories and three aircraft go-arounds

to commercial and U.S. Coast Guard aircraft” near Reagan National. They cited an FAA briefing to House committee staff. An FAA spectrum analysis “identified that an activation of USSS [counter-unmanned aircraft systems] technology at a nearby Department of Defense ... location was the cause of these false alerts,” the two said, adding that the FAA didn’t receive any notification from the service about this “activation.”

— **Larsen and Thompson noted that DHS staff** have informed Congress of a new internal investigation into the alert anomalies.

SERVICE RESPONDS: A spokesperson for the Secret Service in a statement to your MT host said the agency’s “practice is to maintain records when activating countermeasures to mitigate Unmanned Aircraft Systems that may be a threat to our protective mission.” (Larsen and Thompson specifically asked DOT and DHS if the deployment in question was part of a testing effort as reported or in response to a potential drone threat.) “Recognizing the gravity of this complex issue, the Secret Service is committed to understanding the circumstances surrounding any event brought to our attention in order to ensure there is no disruption at [Reagan National] or any other airports located in proximity to our protectees,” the spokesperson said.

SHUTTING IT DOWN: FAA Acting Administrator Chris Rocheleau late Monday said the agency has issued an emergency order grounding New York Helicopter Charter Inc., which operated the Bell 206 helicopter that crashed into the Hudson River off Jersey City, New Jersey, last week, killing all six people aboard. “The FAA is taking this action in part because after the company’s director of operations voluntarily shut down flights, he was fired,” Rocheleau said on X.

— **He added that the agency has launched a review** of the company’s operations.

To understand how the Golden State is defining tech policy and politics within its borders and beyond, we’ve launched POLITICO Pro Technology: California

Decoded. This new daily newsletter will track how industry players in Silicon Valley are trying to influence state and national lawmakers – and how government officials are encouraging or foiling those figures. To get the newsletter delivered straight to your inbox, [log in to manage your newsletters](#).

RAIL

NOT IN THE CARDS, NAVY YARD SAYS: DOT announced an agreement Monday between the FRA and Amtrak to “terminate” a \$63.9 million Biden-era grant awarded to the railroad through the Corridor Identification and Development Program, or CID, for the Amtrak Texas High-Speed Rail Corridor, previously known as the Texas Central Railway project between Dallas and Houston. The FRA can “reallocate” this money to other rail initiatives, DOT said. “The Texas Central Railway project was proposed as a private venture,” Duffy said in a statement. “If the private sector believes this project is feasible, they should carry the pre-construction work forward, rather than relying on Amtrak and the American taxpayer to bail them out.”

— **Kleinheinz Capital Partners, lead investment sponsor in Texas Central**, in a statement to POLITICO called DOT’s action “good news” for the project, saying that the first Trump administration gave it the “green light,” but the endeavor got “hung up in the politics” of the Biden administration’s “efforts to jam Amtrak” into it. “We agree with Secretary Duffy that this project should be led by the private sector, and we will be proud to take it forward,” the statement read.

ON THE HILL

TEEING IT UP: Sean McMaster, Trump’s pick to be FHWA administrator, will have his confirmation hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in May, a person with direct knowledge of the panel’s schedule told Chris on Monday.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

HITTING THE AIRWAVES: American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers announced Monday an eight-figure ad buy aimed at pressuring congressional lawmakers to revoke California's vehicle emissions rules, targeting local markets in Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas and Washington. [Alex Nieves has the story.](#)

SPACE

'EXTRATERRESTRIAL' VOYAGE: [Get that reference?](#) If you're a Katy Perry fan, probably! The pop singer on Monday was among an all-women group aboard Blue Origin's eleventh spaceflight for its New Shepard program. Aisha Bowe, Amanda Nguyen, Gayle King, Kerianne Flynn and Lauren Sánchez joined her. They successfully returned to Earth.

THE AUTOBAHN

— [“Helicopter Tours Are Booming, Despite Spotty Safety Record.”](#) Wall Street Journal.

— [“Audi and Porsche Recall Thousands of U.S. Vehicles Due to Software Issues.”](#) Wall Street Journal.

— [“Self-Driving Truck Startup Kodiak to Go Public in \\$2.5 Billion SPAC Deal.”](#) Wall Street Journal.

— [“FAA SAFO Warns Air Carriers of Visual Approach Risks.”](#) Aviation International News.

— [“As legacy of Ford fades in Brazil, China's BYD looks to extend global lead in EV sales.”](#) AP.

To understand how the Golden State is defining tech policy and politics within its borders and beyond, we've launched POLITICO Pro Technology: California Decoded. This new daily newsletter will track how industry players in Silicon Valley are trying to influence state and national lawmakers – and how government officials are encouraging or foiling those figures. To get the newsletter delivered straight to your inbox, [log in to manage your newsletters and policy interests](#).

ON THE CALENDAR

— 9:30 a.m. NTSB holds a meeting about a fire aboard the Grande Costa D'Avorio, a roll-on/roll-off container ship, in Newark, New Jersey, on July 5, 2023. NTSB Conference Center, 429 L'Enfant Plaza SW.

Know of an event we should have on our calendar? Let MT know at transpocalendar@politicopro.com.

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