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MONTHLY REPORT

LATEST LEGISLATIVE &
REGULATORY UPDATES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER PRIORITIES

After a record-breaking 43 days, the federal government officially reopened on November 12. The reopening followed mounting pressure from federal employee unions, growing strain on the aviation system, and concerns that 42 million Americans could lose food stamp benefits. Eight Senate Democrats joined most Senate Republicans to advance the agreement that ended the longest shutdown in U.S. history. While the final package did not include an extension of Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits that lower health insurance premiums, Senate Leader Thune committed to holding a vote on the issue in December.

While the House remained in recess throughout the shutdown - returning only to approve the Senate-passed continuing resolution (CR) - the Senate continued its work. The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation (CST) Committee held hearings and markups to advance key transportation nominees, including Trent Morse to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Board and Michelle Schultz for another term on the Surface Transportation Board.

LOOKING FORWARD

With ACA and energy tax credits set to expire on December 31, 2025, and only a few weeks of session remaining, Congress faces a packed legislative agenda. Beyond the healthcare debate, Armed Services Committee leaders are negotiating a final National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) with hopes of passing a compromise version this month. The current CR expires on January 30, 2026, giving Congress just 11 calendar weeks to finalize the remaining nine FY 2026 appropriations bills - an uphill climb given ongoing disagreements over funding levels.

Lawmakers aim to regain momentum on bipartisan bills stalled by the shutdown, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reforms and legislation to reauthorize pipeline safety programs. The CR also extended the 2018 Farm Bill through September 30, 2026, removing it from end-of-year negotiations. Furthermore, Congress will continue consideration of Trump Administration nominees.

REOPENING THE GOVERNMENT

OVERVIEW

The federal government officially reopened on November 12 when President Trump signed the spending package ([H.R. 5371](#)) into law after the House approved it via a 222-209 vote. Six Democrats - Representatives Golden (ME), Gluesenkamp Perez (WA), Gray (CA), Cuellar (TX), Suozzi (NY), and Davis (NC) - voted in favor. Two Republicans - Representatives Massie (KY) and Steube (FL) joined most House Democrats in opposition.

Prior to the final House vote, moderate Senate Democrats paved the way for passage by crossing party lines to support the CR. Seven Senate Democrats and one Independent - Senators Shaheen (NH), Durbin (IL), Kaine (VA), Hassan (NH), King (ME), Rosen (NV), Cortez Masto (NV), and Fetterman (PA) - joined all Senate Republicans to pass the measure 60-40 vote on November 9.

In return for their support, Senate Majority Leader Thune promised a December vote on extending the ACA premium tax credits. That vote is expected to fail, and House Speaker Johnson has committed the House to no such vote. President Trump has instead urged Congress to redirect health insurance subsidies directly to individuals, and House Republicans are circulating draft legislation aligned with his proposal. Congress has just four weeks before the credits expire on December 31, 2025.



Politico, 11/12/25



NPR, 11/9/25

Please see the next page for a breakdown of what is included in the package that reopened the government (H.R. 5371).

REOPENING THE GOVERNMENT

APPROVED FUNDING

The package provides full-year FY26 funding for:

- **Military Construction-VA:** \$153.3 billion in net discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and military construction projects plus \$122.3 billion in advance FY2027 appropriations for VA programs.
- **Agriculture-FDA:** \$26.7 billion in net discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and related agencies, including \$107.5 billion in mandatory funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and \$8.2 billion in discretionary funding for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- **Legislative Branch:** \$7.3 billion in discretionary funding for Congress and legislative branch agencies, including \$2.1 billion for House operations and \$1.5 billion for the Senate.

All other federal agencies are funded at FY24 levels through January 30, 2026, setting up another federal funding clash early next year.

ADDITIONAL CLAUSES

- Reimburses states for federal expenses they covered during the shutdown, including SNAP benefits.
- Requires that agencies reinstate the roughly 4,000 federal employees fired during the shutdown and prohibits new mass federal layoffs through January 30, 2026.
- Extends the 2018 Farm Bill programs and U.S. Grain Standards Act through September 30, 2026.
- Demands phone/communication providers to notify Senate offices of any federal data disclosure requests - an issue tied to subpoenas of eight Republican Senators' data in 2023. The House voted unanimously to repeal the provision. Senate action remains uncertain.



Politico, 11/12/25

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

OVERVIEW

The extended federal government shutdown has significantly delayed work on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill. House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chair Graves (R-MO) now expects to hold a markup early next year, with a floor vote on the House floor in the spring -a shift from his original goal of passage by the end of 2025. Chair Graves says he intends this to be “the most important highway bill” since 1956.

Senate progress has also slowed. The Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over the rail title, has not made much progress since soliciting Member-level requests earlier this fall, and Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) Chair Capito (R-WV) - whose committee has jurisdiction over the highway title - aims to release a draft by year’s end.

DOT TRANSIT PROPOSALS

The Trump Administration has started to weigh in on surface reauthorization. According to reports from Politico, DOT sent two proposals to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that would sharply reduce transit funding. The administration plans to submit both proposals for inclusion in the surface transportation reauthorization bill.

In its first proposal, the administration considers eliminating an account within the Highway Trust Fund that provides billions of dollars for mass transit, looking instead to divert those funds to a highway construction account. In the proposal, DOT states that a direct user pay model for public transit should be utilized over repurposed money from highway users.

In the second proposal, DOT recommends eliminating the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) authority to fund transit projects and prohibiting states from using highway formula dollars for transit projects. The effort notes that in FY2024, states shifted roughly \$1.6 billion from FHWA’s highway account to the Federal Transit Administration for that purpose.

Efforts to eliminate the mass transit account are unlikely to gain traction. House T&I Chairman Graves (R-MO) has committed to a bipartisan bill. When asked about eliminating the transit account, Chairman Graves dismissed the idea responding, “No. It’s been there for 40 years, and I want this to be a bipartisan bill.” While the final package may tilt more heavily toward highway investments, key funding details are still being negotiated.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

PERMITTING REFORM

Permitting reform discussions continued during the shutdown. House Committee on Natural Resources Chair Westerman (R-AR) advanced his bipartisan bill, [H.R. 4776](#), the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act in a committee markup on November 20. This proposal would amend the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to set firmer deadlines and limit judicial delays. An adopted amendment would restrict the executive branch's ability to cancel energy projects - helping to resolve an important point of contention in broader negotiations. Representative Westerman is targeting a floor vote this year.

In the Senate, bipartisan discussions continue on a broader permitting reform package addressing transmission infrastructure, a net reduction in emissions, and safeguards for permitted projects to gain Democratic support. Democrats are also pressing the Trump Administration to stop disrupting clean energy funding as part of negotiations.



DOT

DOT DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) PROGRAM

On November 18, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Larsen (D-WA) and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Small Business Velázquez (D-NY) led 88 House Democrats in urging DOT Secretary Duffy to preserve the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, which supports more than 50,000 small businesses in every state of the union. The Members urged DOT to implement changes to the DBE program that improve fairness, protect small businesses, maintain relevant data, and ensure program stability for project sponsors, construction industry and transportation workers.

Read the letter [here](#).

NOTABLE NOVEMBER HEARINGS & MARKUPS

Trent Morse



CSPAN, 11/6/25

NOVEMBER 5 - SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS HEARING

Considered:

- Ryan McCormack for Undersecretary of Transportation for Policy;
- Daniel Edwards for Assistant DOT Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs; and
- Trent Morse for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Board.

NOVEMBER 6 - SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS HEARING

Considered:

- John DeLeeuw as a new Member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB);
- Richard Kloster as a new Member of the Surface Transportation Board (STB); and
- Michelle Schultz to continue as a Member of the STB.

Chair Cruz (R-TX) supported the three nominees and highlighted the importance of the nominees' experience for the roles. Chair Cruz also commended Department of Transportation Secretary Duffy and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Bedford for protecting aviation safety during the shutdown.

Prior to the hearing, ten Democrats on the Committee, including Ranking Member Cantwell (D-WA), urged Chair Cruz to cancel DeLeeuw's consideration after the Administration removed former NTSB Vice Chair Alvin Brown (appointed by President Biden) earlier this year. DeLeeuw would replace Brown's seat on the NTSB. Brown is challenging his dismissal in federal court, as he only served one of his five allotted term years at the NTSB.

Michelle Schultz



CSPAN, 11/6/25

John DeLeeuw



Transportation Topics, 11/13/25

NOTABLE NOVEMBER HEARINGS & MARKUPS

NOVEMBER 19 - SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE AVIATION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING: *FLYING ON EMPTY: HOW SHUTDOWNS THREATEN AIR SAFETY, TRAVEL, AND THE ECONOMY*

Senate Commerce Aviation Subcommittee Chair Moran (R-KS) examined shutdown impacts on the U.S. aviation system and how to ensure the FAA can be insulated from the effects of any future government shutdown. The Senator also called for his Aviation Funding Stability Act to advance. The legislation would allow the FAA to access funds through the Airport and Airway Trust Fund to maintain operations and pay air traffic controllers during funding lapses.

NOVEMBER 19 - SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Committee votes included:

- Stephen Carmel to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration (21-7);
- Laura DiBella to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner (20-8);
- Ethan Klein to be Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (15-13);
- Trent Morse to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (15-13);
- Timothy Petty to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (21-7); and
- Michelle Schultz to be a Member of the Surface Transportation Board (18-10).

The committee did not consider Ryan McCormack's nomination to be Undersecretary of Transportation for Policy or John DeLeeuw's selection to the NTSB. According to committee staff, this was because their paperwork was incomplete.

OTHER HEARINGS

November 19 - Senate Commerce Committee Nominations Hearing

- *Adm. Kevin E. Lunday to be the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard*



The House held 0 relevant hearings this month.



Senator Moran, 11/19/25

ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

OVERALL IMPACT OF THE SHUTDOWN & REOPENING

With over 650,000 furloughed federal employees returning to work, and about 1.25 million federal workers receiving backpay from the duration of the shutdown, it will likely be a slow return to efficient approvals for grant processing and project authorizations across government agencies.

Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Head Start are now fully operational again, ensuring that the 42 million Americans who rely on SNAP can continue receiving their benefits.

In terms of air travel, more than five million travelers faced cancellations and delays during the shutdown. With the government reopened and air traffic controllers and TSA agents now receiving backpay and full paychecks, the FAA has lifted all restrictions on commercial flights that were imposed at 40 major airports during the shutdown. Impacted airports included major hubs in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. The flight cuts started at 4% and grew to 6% before the FAA rolled the restrictions back to 3%. Airlines have since resumed regular operations.

On the economic front, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates the shutdown reduced U.S. economic growth by 1.5%, resulting in a permanent loss of about \$11 billion in GDP. These losses stem from the reduced number of paid hours for furloughed government employees.



IMPACT ON DOT

Following the government reopening on November 12, DOT modal agencies recalled the 12,000 furloughed DOT employees and restarted paused activities such as research, rulemaking, and contract administration.

Agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which rely heavily on the Highway Trust Fund's contract authority, remained operational. Amtrak also operated under normal conditions during the shutdown, even experiencing a rise in ridership and higher prices for seats as travelers chose rail over air travel delays.

The shutdown reignited the conversation about the critical shortage of air traffic controllers. Secretary Duffy reported that during the shutdown, 15 to 20 retirement-aged controllers left the workforce per day, up from the typical rate of four. Additionally, some newer controllers also resigned during the shutdown.

Although air traffic controllers are once again receiving full federal paychecks, there is still an ongoing nationwide shortage of air traffic controllers. As of last year, the U.S. government was short 3,903 fully certified air traffic controllers from a goal of 14,633. The long-term impact of the shutdown on air traffic controller staffing could be severe and is yet to be fully assessed.

ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

NOMINATIONS UPDATES

On November 19, the Senate Commerce Committee advanced two key transportation nominees:

- Trent Morse to be a Board Member of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (15-13);
- Michelle Schultz to continue serving as a Member of the Surface Transportation Board (18-10).

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

UNION PACIFIC & NORFOLK SOUTHERN MERGER

- Union Pacific (UP) and Norfolk Southern (NS) cleared their first merger hurdle as shareholders overwhelmingly backed their deal to create the first transcontinental railroad. In separate votes on November 14, nearly 99% of NS shareholders and 99.5% of UP shareholders approved UP's proposed \$85 billion acquisition of NS.
- As part of the deal, NS investors will receive one Union Pacific common share and \$88.82 in cash for each share of Norfolk Southern owned. Meanwhile, UP investors were asked to approve the issuing of new shares of UP common stock in connection with the merger.
- The railroads plan to file their merger application with the Surface Transportation Board in early December.

Trains, 10/16/25

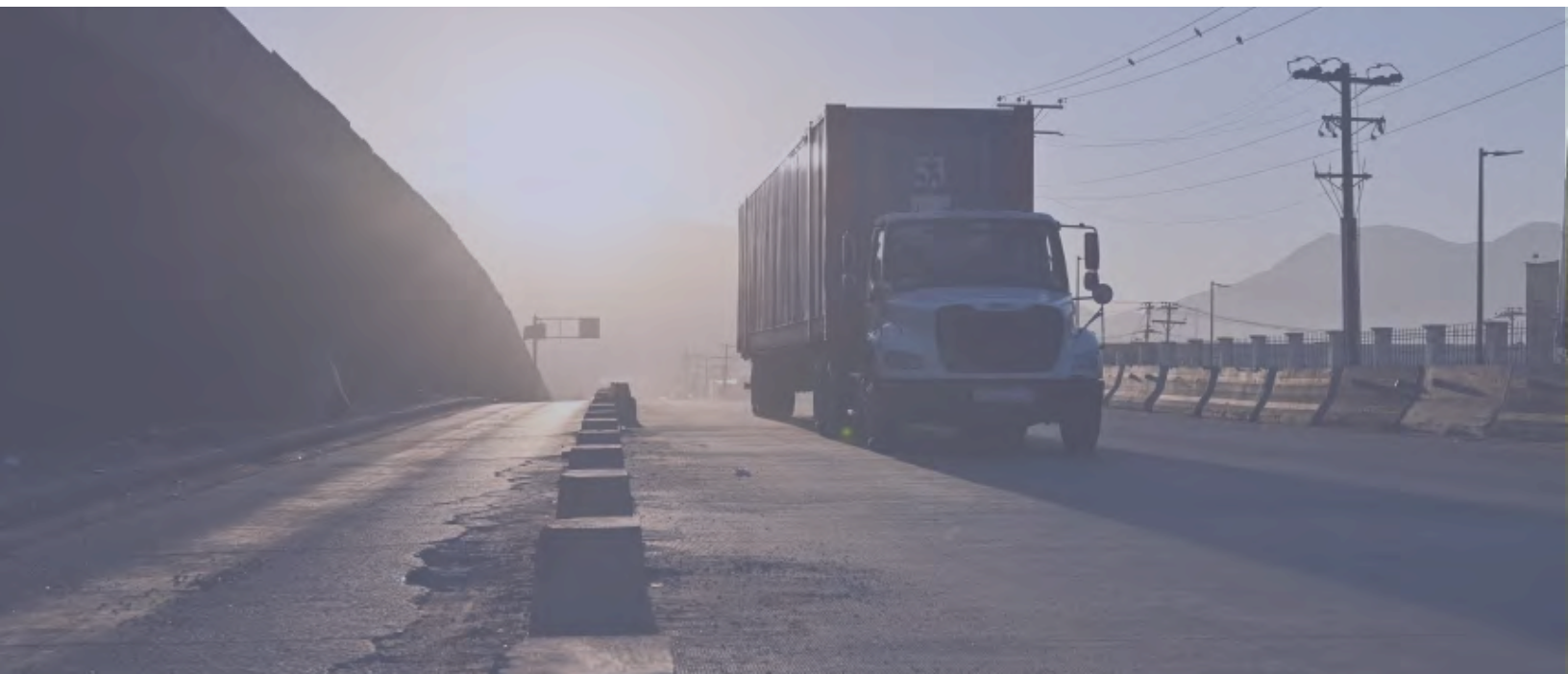


TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION

- California plans to revoke 17,000 commercial driver's licenses given to immigrants following President Trump's issuance of an executive order requiring commercial truck drivers to speak, read, and write English proficiently.
- Governor Newsom said the Trump Administration had no influence on this decision. He stated that the licenses were revoked because state officials discovered their expiration dates had passed when the drivers were legally allowed to be in the United States.
- The announcement comes on the heels of two deadly crashes involving undocumented immigrant drivers, which spurred DOT to issue new restrictions that would severely limit which immigrants can obtain commercial driver's licenses for a semitrailer truck or bus. A federal appeals court in the District of Columbia put these new restrictions on hold on November 13, stating that the federal government did not follow proper procedure in drafting the rule and failed to "articulate a satisfactory explanation for how the rule would promote safety." The court said the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's own data shows that immigrants who hold these licenses account for roughly 5% of all commercial driver's licenses but only about 0.2% of all fatal crashes.

CNN, 11/14/25





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