

Memorandum

TO: Miami-Dade County

FROM: Greenberg Traurig

DATE: May 1, 2019

RE: April Monthly Report

Below please find a summary of Greenberg Traurig's efforts on behalf of Miami-Dade County and news stories in Washington from the month of April. Washington Updates are provided by CQ Roll Call. If you have any questions, or if we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Budget & Appropriations

House appropriators will start writing their fiscal 2020 spending bills, beginning with the largest of the nondefense-related measures, Labor-HHS-Education.

With no bipartisan accord on spending levels for the coming fiscal year, the House is plunging ahead with bills that assume higher limits than allowed under a 2011 deficit reduction law (PL 112-25). The Democratic-controlled House adopted an informal "deeming" resolution (H Res 293) that sets an overall limit on discretionary spending of \$1.295 trillion, avoiding a 10 percent cut required under the 2011 law. But that higher limit is not binding in the Republican-controlled Senate.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill, second only to Defense in terms of size among the 12 annual spending bills, is often the battleground for partisan policy fights over health insurance, abortion access, gun violence research, school choice and more. The measure is scheduled to get a vote in subcommittee, with a full committee markup tentatively set for May 8. Subcommittee markups are also likely to be held soon for the Military Construction-VA and Legislative Branch bills.

Meanwhile, Democratic leaders are scheduled to meet with President Donald Trump in an effort to revive talks on an infrastructure spending initiative. Trump campaigned on a \$1 trillion infrastructure package and leaders of both parties say the issue has bipartisan appeal.

Talks also will continue into next month on a long-stalled aid package for victims of recent hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes and other natural disasters. The House plans to soon take up its latest \$17.2 billion disaster aid measure (HR 2157), and hearings continue on fiscal 2020 budget requests. Among the most consequential may be the request from the Department of Homeland Security, which includes more funding for a southern border wall — the line-item that sparked the 35-day partial government shutdown, the longest in history, that ended in late January.

Health Care

Lawmakers renew focus on opioids with the introduction of a bill that aims to curb the flow of illegal opioids into the United States and another to help physicians learn more about a patient's substance abuse history. The separate actions by a bipartisan group of Senators and another of House members are drawing fresh attention to the overdose crisis, which is a concern for both parties even though Congress cleared an opioids law (PL 115-271) just last year. One of the bills, a Senate measure, stands a good chance of becoming law, said co-sponsor Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y. The new measure offered by a bipartisan group led by Schumer and Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., would authorize the Trump administration to place sanctions on China to pressure the country into cracking down on exports of fentanyl — a potent synthetic opioid that is predominantly manufactured in China.

The bill would authorize an additional \$600 million for intelligence and law enforcement officials to identify illicit fentanyl producers and traffickers and their financial networks. It would direct the president to make public the list of the producers and use sanction tools against them. This could include denying Chinese pharmaceutical companies access to U.S. markets, freezing their assets, or denying visas. The bill also calls for a diplomatic effort for an international opioid control regime and would establish a commission to recommend additional policy actions to curb the foreign supply of fentanyl.

In the House, another bipartisan group is pushing for action on a bill (HR 2062, S 1012) that would change how patient information is shared for individuals with a substance use disorder, but the measure faces steeper odds than the Senate bill. Current law sets barriers that prevent health professionals from disclosing information about a patient's substance use history in the same way as other medical records. The bill's sponsors, Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., and Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., argue that medical providers should know a patient's full history.

The House passed a similar bill last year, but it was not included in the final opioid law and was not considered by the Senate. "This is one of the most significant policies we can address to continue our efforts to combat the opioid crisis," said House Energy and Commerce Committee ranking member Greg Walden, R-Ore., who led last year's effort on the bill. "I look forward to swift passage of this bill so doctors can safely and effectively treat patients with substance use disorder while ensuring the necessary privacy protections remain in place." But the measure faces a more difficult path this year, with Frank Pallone Jr., D-N.J., at the helm of Energy and Commerce this year. Pallone was one of the measure's biggest skeptics. Pallone said last year that allowing health care professionals to share treatment information without explicit permission from a patient may make some individuals less likely to seek treatment altogether out of fear they may be stigmatized.

GT continues to work with the County's congressional delegation to advance legislation that tackles mental health reform and the nation's opioid addiction crisis, and has kept Miami-Dade updated on the status and outlook for these pieces of legislation.

Infrastructure

Congressional Democrats said President Donald Trump agreed to pursue a \$2 trillion infrastructure package after a meeting with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, but White House officials later said the administration is not ready to endorse a specific spending amount. "We agreed on a number, which was very, very good," Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer said outside the White House following the meeting. "Originally we had started a little lower but even the president was eager to push it up to \$2 trillion. There was goodwill in this meeting and that was different from other meetings that we have had."

Appearing with Schumer, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the meeting "very productive." The meeting was labeled "productive" as well by White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who said in a statement the U.S. "has not come even close to properly investing in infrastructure for many years, foolishly prioritizing the interests of other countries over our own." She did not mention an agreement on spending. Another White House official later didn't dispute the figure heralded by the Democrats, but indicated the administration will hold off on endorsing a specific amount since talks are in the early stages. All of the parties said the Democrats and the president agreed to meet again in three weeks to discuss specific ways to pay for the huge tab.

GT will continue to monitor and provide analysis on infrastructure hearings and proposals as more information becomes available.

SNAP

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue told House appropriators his department's use of the term "able-bodied" may need fine-tuning in a proposed rule that would limit states from offering waivers from food stamp work requirements and time limits. An estimated 755,000 able-bodied adults without dependents, a subset of the nearly 40 million food stamp recipients, could lose food aid if the proposed rule takes effect as written. Democrats and anti-poverty advocates say many people in this category work less than 20 hours a week or have health issues, limited education or other challenges to employment.

Perdue, who testified at the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee on the department's fiscal 2020 budget request of \$15.7 billion in discretionary funding, fielded questions on the proposed food stamp rule and a contentious plan to move two research-related agencies and other issues. The request is \$4.2 billion less than the fiscal 2019 enacted level. The request excludes funding for the Forest Service, which is funded through the Interior-Environment appropriations bill.

Although the USDA proposed budget calls for a 21 percent cut from fiscal 2019, the closest Perdue came to being grilled by subcommittee members was a string of questions from Chairman Sanford D. Bishop Jr., D-Ga., on the proposed relocation of the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture out of the Washington region. Perdue continued to

stand by the proposed move, but he said the department will share with lawmakers cost analyses of potential locations for the agencies after whittling down the remaining 68 proposals.

GT will continue to send SNAP updates as more information becomes available.

Media Updates

GT continues to send daily media updates on legislative and political issues to the County in order to ensure that the Commission and staff remain up-to-date on developments within the Beltway. Our team has continued to send those interested individual's information regarding issues such as tax reform, health care, and appropriations, among others. We will continue to monitor the issues most relevant to the County and provide timely and accurate information in order to make certain that the County is aware of any developments which may provide an opportunity to accomplish established goals.

(Below is an example of one of GT's Washington Updates, which are sent to County officials each day.)

Good Afternoon,

Congress is back from recess! Below is a look at today's news and events in DC. If you have any questions or need anything, please let us know.

Today at a Glance: April 29, 2019

Top Stories for the Day

- Both chambers have returned from recess. The next recess is not planned until the week of May 27.
- Lawmakers return this week to start navigating through several difficult budget issues, including a stalled aid package for natural disaster victims and spending levels for the upcoming fiscal year.
- House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Schumer are expected to meet with the President at the White House on Tuesday to try to set a path to passage of a public works infrastructure package as the 2020 elections draw nearer.
- House Appropriators will markup its Labor-HHS-Education measure on Tuesday this week. The Military Construction-VA and Legislative Branch measures also are expected for markup this week.
- Lawmakers will get a chance to question Attorney General William Barr this week after the release of the redacted special counsel report.

- The Environmental Protection Agency proposed draft cleanup standards Thursday for groundwater contaminated by so-called forever chemicals, but advocates who urged the adoption of such standards said they were too weak.

House: Convenes at 2 p.m. to consider three bills under suspension of the rules.

Senate: Convenes at 3 p.m. to consider the nomination of William Cooper to be general counsel for the Energy Department, with a vote on a motion to invoke cloture expected at 5:30 p.m.

Committee hearings of interest this week:

- Homeland Security Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee hearing on "FY2020 Budget Hearing - Department of Homeland Security." Tuesday, 9am.
- Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee hearing on "2020 Census Preparation." Tuesday, 10am.
- Communications and Technology Subcommittee of House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on "Legislating to Stop the Onslaught of Annoying Robocalls." Tuesday, 10am.
- Border Security, Facilitation, and Operations Subcommittee of House Homeland Security Committee hearing on "The Impacts of Trump Policies on Border Communities." Tuesday, 10am.
- Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee of House Natural Resources Committee hearing on "Public Lands and our Clean Energy Future." Tuesday, 10am.
- Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of House Natural Resources Committee hearing on "No Road Map, No Destination, No Justification: The Implementation and Impacts of the Reorganization of the Department of the Interior." Tuesday, 10am.
- House Select Climate Crisis Committee hearing on "Solving the Climate Crisis: Drawing Down Carbon and Building Up the American Economy." Tuesday, 10am.
- House Education and Labor Committee hearing on "Brown v. Board of Education at 65: A Promise Unfulfilled." Tuesday, 10:15am.
- Homeland Security Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee hearing on "FY2020 Budget Hearing - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)." Tuesday, 1pm.
- Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection and Innovation Subcommittee of House Homeland Security Committee hearing on "Resourcing DHS' Cybersecurity and Innovation Missions: A Review of the FY2020 Budget Request for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the Science and Technology Directorate." Tuesday, 2pm.
- Environment Subcommittee of House Oversight and Reform Committee hearing on "Climate Change, Part II: The Public Health Effects." Tuesday, 2pm.
- House Financial Services Committee hearing on "Housing in America: Assessing the Infrastructure Needs of America's Housing Stock." Tuesday, 10am.
- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee markup of the FY2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Tuesday, 4pm.
- Homeland Security Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee hearing on "FY2020 Budget Hearing - Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency." Wednesday, 9:30am.
- Defense Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee hearing on "Department of Defense - FY2020 Budget Hearing." Wednesday, 10am.

- Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee hearing on "Consumer Perspectives: Policy Principles for a Federal Data Privacy Framework." Wednesday, 10am.
- House Education and Labor Committee hearing on the policies and priorities of the Labor Department. Wednesday, 10:15am.
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee of House Oversight and Reform Committee hearing on "Protecting the Right to Vote: Best and Worst Practices." Wednesday, 2pm.
- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee markup of the FY2020 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Wednesday, 3pm.
- Homeland Security Subcommittee of Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on the proposed budget estimates and justification for FY2020 for the Homeland Security Department. Thursday, 10am.
- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee of Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on the proposed budget estimates and justification for FY2020 for the Labor Department. Thursday, 10am.
- Investigations Subcommittee hearing on "Oversight of Federal Infrastructure Permitting and FAST-41." Thursday, 10am.

(Toplines from: April 29, 2019 – 5:02 a.m. By Erin Bacon, CQ)

Budget Talks, Spending Bills in Focus as Congress Reconvenes

April 29, 2019 – 5:00 a.m. By Paul M. Krawzak, CQ

Lawmakers return to the Capitol this week to start navigating through a thicket of budget issues, including a stalled aid package for natural disaster victims and spending levels for the upcoming fiscal year.

Staff-level talks between the "four corners" of the congressional leadership and top White House aides have been taking place to try to bridge a wide gulf between the Trump administration and Democratic leaders on nondefense appropriations. Democrats are pushing for over \$100 billion more than President Donald Trump wants for domestic and foreign aid programs in fiscal 2020, once various add-ons to the current spending caps like overseas foreign assistance and 2020 census preparations are factored in.

In the meantime, farmers and ranchers across the country, many of whom couldn't plant crops this spring to replace disaster-related losses, are pleading for financial aid from Congress. "The livelihoods of farm families and the economic health of rural communities are at stake," 135 farm groups and agricultural lenders wrote to Trump and congressional leaders April 19.

Aid to Puerto Rico has been the chief sticking point on the disaster aid packages, which range from \$13.5 billion to \$17.2 billion in size. Trump has been critical of Puerto Rican officials' handling of prior disaster aid appropriations and has voiced reluctance to provide more. Without provisions benefiting Puerto Rico, Senate Democrats won't provide the votes necessary to advance the measure in that chamber.

But Senate Republicans came back from a meeting with Trump prior to the two-week spring break with renewed optimism they'd be able to reach a deal. Affected states like Georgia and Florida, represented by Senate Republicans, were relatively close calls for Trump in 2016. And Iowa, like other Midwest states

hit hard by recent flooding, is always a presidential bellwether and one Trump needs to keep in his corner.

Lurking in the background is the statutory debt ceiling, which currently sits at just shy of \$22 trillion, but can't support any additional borrowing past late September or early October, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

While there's time to spare, the White House wants a quick and "clean" deal to take the market-rattling debt limit issue off the table before there's any chance of catastrophic default on U.S. obligations, whether to Treasury bondholders, Social Security beneficiaries or anything else. But there's scant evidence either party is in the mood to act quickly to raise the national credit card limit, particularly after getting a fresh reminder Thursday, when the CBO's new baseline budget outlook is published, that the country is headed for a record debt burden in the coming decades.

Getting a Jump

Democratic leaders have little incentive to resolve the debt ceiling neatly for Treasury while their favored nondefense programs languish in limbo. In a report accompanying legislation (HR 2021) to raise the spending caps for the next two years, House Democrats wrote their plan to raise topline nondefense funding by 5.7 percent above fiscal 2019, to \$631 billion, would "allow an appropriate level of investment in projects and services to strengthen the Nation's economic foundations and promote broad-based prosperity for American families."

House Democrats "deemed" a combined spending target (H Res 293) for appropriators before the recess, though Appropriations Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey, D-N.Y., said she'll honor the defense-nondefense split in the caps bill she co-authored with House Budget Chairman John Yarmuth, D-Ky.

Members of the Progressive Caucus opposed those numbers because defense would receive a greater allocation. But Lowey and Yarmuth agreed to the "parity principle" of equal dollar increases above the statutory spending caps (PL 112-25) and believe going further toward the most liberal members' position would be a step back from good-faith negotiations with the Senate.

And by getting a jump on the Senate in marking up appropriations bills, House Democrats believe they can exert some leverage on the spending caps talks.

Subcommittee allocations haven't yet been released, but applying the same 5.7 percent boost for all nondefense programs proportionally across the nondefense bills would imply a \$188.3 billion allocation for the Labor-HHS-Education bill, which House appropriators will mark up in subcommittee Tuesday. That would be a \$10.2 billion boost above fiscal 2019 (PL 115-245) levels, and 17 percent above Labor-HHS-Education spending enacted two years ago (PL 115-31).

Generating support among health and education stakeholders early on could also assuage progressives' concerns and also build momentum for talks with Senate Republicans.

Still, House Democrats acknowledge their proposed spending cap for nondefense may not be enough to meet the needs. They are adding a cap "adjustment" to make room for \$7.5 billion in 2020 census funding that won't eat into other programs.

And as part of the Military Construction-VA measure going to a subcommittee markup Wednesday, Democrats will lay out how they plan to deal with a \$10 billion estimated need for veterans private medical care in light of a new law passed last year (PL 115-182) that shifts the costs to appropriators. Democratic leaders were ready to accept an amendment to the spending caps bill from Barbara Lee, D-Calif., to add the veterans money, but they were forced to pull the measure anyway due to the progressives' revolt.

A Legislative Branch subcommittee markup is also planned for Wednesday.

House appropriators are looking at marking up the Defense bill soon as well, though no date has been set. Energy-Water also could be one of the first several bills to be marked up. Lowey is aiming to complete markups by early June, leaving time for House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, D-Md., to bring all 12 bills to the floor before the end of June.

Priority on Disaster Aid

The Senate has not yet begun to mark up next year's appropriations bills, or even settled on overall allocations for defense and nondefense spending, in part because Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard C. Shelby, R-Ala., has prioritized reaching agreement on disaster aid legislation.

Republicans charge that reaching an accord has become more difficult because Democrats keep "moving the goal posts." According to a Senate GOP aide, Trump made a major concession when he agreed to \$600 million in food assistance to Puerto Rico that is contained in the GOP-written \$13.5 billion package.

But as the two sides were getting closer to agreement, the GOP aide said, House and Senate Democrats went in the other direction, asking to cover 100 percent of the cost of Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance for Puerto Rico, which the aide estimated would cost \$5 billion.

Senate Democrats rejected the accusation they are moving the goal posts, saying they made an offer March 4 to scale back assistance provided to Puerto Rico and Senate Republicans objected to it. A Senate Democratic appropriations aide charged Trump "is holding disaster aid hostage over a petty political grudge with the American citizens of Puerto Rico."

The Democratic aide said Department of Housing and Urban Development officials changed their minds and said Puerto Rico shouldn't receive any Community Development Block Grant money to cover the FEMA cost-share for relief projects. Under a proposal from Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., and Senate Appropriations ranking member Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., offered in early April, Democrats estimated Puerto Rico would receive \$304 million.

However, a GOP aide said HUD told Republicans all along that none of the CDBG funds in the Senate Democrats' amendment would go to Puerto Rico because ample CDBG funds already have been appropriated for the island territory.

The various aid packages would offer long-delayed relief to victims of hurricanes, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters from California to the Southeast. The House passed an initial \$14.2 billion package (HR 268) in January, only to watch it stall for months as the dispute over Puerto Rico intensified.

The new House Democratic offering (HR 2157) contains an additional \$3 billion to respond to flooding in the Midwest and tornadoes that ripped through Southeastern states this year. Schumer and Leahy followed up with the introduction of a companion Senate version on April 11.

Hoyer announced last week that the House will take up its disaster relief supplemental on the floor the week of May 6.

Pelosi, Schumer Heading to White House on Infrastructure Drive

April 29, 2019 – 5:00 a.m. By Elvina Nawaguna, CQ

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer are expected to meet with the president at the White House on Tuesday to try to set a path to passage of a public works package as the 2020 elections draw nearer.

In a Friday letter to fellow lawmakers, Pelosi said the meeting will focus on advancing “bipartisan action on a bold infrastructure bill to create jobs and grow our economy in a green and modern way.”

Industry groups eager for federal funding to build and repair highways and bridges and make other improvements to the nation’s crumbling infrastructure, think the chance for a deal is stronger now as lawmakers want an accomplishment to tout to their constituents as they pursue reelection in 2020.

“We feel pretty optimistic,” said Bill Sullivan, American Trucking Associations’ executive vice president of advocacy.

While the details of what will be discussed are yet to be divulged, Pelosi has said she wants an infrastructure package of up to \$2 trillion over 10 years. Trump has asked Congress for \$200 billion over the same period in his fiscal 2020 budget request, which the administration had asserted could attract \$1 trillion in state and private sector spending. Lawmakers of both parties last year rejected a similar White House proposal because it would require states to put up a significant portion of the money.

Several industry groups have raised the prospect of hiking the federal fuel tax, which has not been increased since 1993. Money generated from the fuel tax goes into the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for roads, bridges and public transit systems, but it is in danger of insolvency.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has proposed partly paying for maintenance and improvements to the country’s transport systems by raising the federal fuel tax by 25 cents per gallon over five years, which it says would generate \$394 billion in 10 years. The American Trucking Associations has also called for a 20-cent hike over four years, which would raise \$340 billion in a decade.

Trump has in a previous meeting with lawmakers backed a 25-cent increase to the gas tax, according to Senate Environment and Public Works ranking member Thomas R. Carper, who attended. But the president, who frequently changes his mind, could face pressure from Republicans reluctant to raise taxes.

“The Highway Trust Fund, in our view, is the foundation for an infrastructure bill,” said Matthew Jeanneret, the chief operating officer of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association. “We’d like to see them move beyond talking and actually working to get legislation passed this year.”

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter A. DeFazio said he's had discussions with Democratic leaders ahead of the meeting, but did not provide details on those conversations. DeFazio has proposed raising fuel taxes by indexing them to inflation and having the Treasury issue bonds on the projected incomes to allow work to proceed before the revenue increases kick in.

"I am hopeful that the talks . . . will be productive, and a catalyst for the robust infrastructure investment we desperately need and to which I'm deeply committed to enacting," DeFazio, an Oregon Democrat, said through an aide.

A Big Ask

But Pelosi's desire for as much as \$2 trillion could complicate chances for compromise in an already sharply divided Congress, where the number was met with skepticism by two key Republicans earlier this month.

"We can't afford that; we can't pay for that," Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso of Wyoming told CQ.

Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Chairman Roger Wicker of Mississippi appeared visibly shocked at the amount, too, but said he hasn't yet "put a pencil" to it.

Both lawmakers said they are in constant communication with Trump and believe ultimately an infrastructure package will be finalized with bipartisan support.

"I've looked high and low and I have found that there's no magic wand, and in the end, we're going to have to be grownups and figure out a way to pay for it," Wicker, a Mississippi Republican, said.

The skepticism over Pelosi's dollar amount was echoed by Jeff Davis, a senior fellow at the Eno Center for Transportation.

"Two trillion dollars is a whole lot of money no matter how many years you spread it over," Davis said. "Yes, numbers that high do pose a problem."

Even over 10 years — \$200 billion per year average — that's more money than most Republicans will be "willing to swallow," particularly if a budget caps deal increases spending by \$150 billion per year, Davis said.

There's no disagreement over the state of the nation's infrastructure and the need to get it fixed. The American Society of Civil Engineers' "Infrastructure Report Card," which rates the state of public works nationwide on a scale of "A" through "F," has since 1998 awarded the U.S. infrastructure on average a "D" because of the continued absence of money to pay for the needed maintenance and improvements.

The association, a widely cited source of analysis of the state of the country's infrastructure, estimated in 2015 that the U.S. needs about \$4.6 trillion by 2025 to repair and maintain the nation's roads, bridges, rails and other public works. With the states and the government expected to spend about half of that, a gap of about \$2.1 trillion would remain.

Although the ASCE's estimate was based on the 10 years leading to 2025, the group says the projection remains relevant because there has been no substantial increase in infrastructure spending since. ASCE updates its projections every four years but would do so sooner if an infrastructure bill passed.

Without a bill at hand, it's hard to assess the details of Pelosi's proposal, but Brian Pallasch, the ASCE's managing director for government relations and infrastructure initiatives, said \$2 trillion would make a dent.

"I want to get as good a number as we can get," Pallasch said. "It seems like it gets us a lot further along in addressing the gap and that would be a giant step forward."

The ASCE says the toll of inaction is \$3.9 trillion in losses to the U.S. GDP by 2025. Businesses would lose \$7 trillion in sales, and the country could lose 2.5 million jobs by 2025, according to the organization.

"We have more than \$2 trillion worth of needs," Ed Mortimer, the vice president of transportation and infrastructure at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said, citing the ASCE's figures.

While Pelosi's suggestion seems high, he said, he believes lawmakers can work together on a solution.

"We believe there's an appetite around the country as long as people know where the money is going and that the investments that are being made are going to benefit the American economy and provide a good quality of life for the citizens, we believe they're willing to pay," Mortimer said.

N.Y.-N.J. Project

At the meeting, Schumer is likely to bring up funding for the Gateway project, which would replace a century-old bridge and tunnel connecting New Jersey and New York. The project, a priority for Schumer and lawmakers in the two states, was excluded from Trump's budget request. That prompted the New York Senator to accuse the Trump administration of stalling the project as revenge for Democratic opposition to a U.S.-Mexico border wall. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has said the project doesn't qualify for federal funding.

While fights over the Gateway project could further complicate infrastructure negotiations, industry representatives are holding up hope that a package could reach the president's desk sometime in the summer.

The possibility of raising the fuel tax as a way to generate some of the money could also be part of the discussions.

"If it were easy to come up with the funding for a modern transportation investment bill this would have happened a long time ago," said Sullivan of the trucking group. "Everybody knows that this is a challenge, but we don't believe it's an insurmountable challenge."

An infrastructure bill would require at least 60 votes in the Senate and 218 in the House.

In the House, where Democrats have the majority, Pelosi likely has the numbers to push through her plan once a bill is written. And both Republicans and Democrats have signaled they would like to get a bill finalized before the August recess.

"It's going to be a challenge, no doubt about it, but we believe the opportunity to get something done is really great," Mortimer said.

House Appropriators to Mark Up Labor-HHS-Education Measure

April 29, 2019 – 5:02 a.m. By Erin Bacon, CQ

It's time to move into the next phase of budget and appropriations: marking up spending bills.

That's what House appropriators are doing this week, starting Tuesday with the Labor-HHS-Education bill. The corresponding House Appropriations subcommittee will meet on the bill, which is typically the second-largest of the 12 annual spending measures, behind Defense.

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to follow up on the Labor-HHS-Education bill on May 8, along with approving suballocations, known as "302(b)" figures.

The Military Construction-VA and Legislative Branch measures also are expected to get the markup treatment this week.

Appropriations Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey, D-N.Y., is writing the bills to coincide with the spending limits in legislation written with House Budget Chairman John Yarmuth, D-Ky. That bill (HR 2021) hasn't come to a vote in the House, but the chamber did adopt a "deeming" resolution (H Res 293) setting an overall discretionary topline of \$1.295 trillion, which matches Yarmuth's bill.

Attorney General Barr Faces Congress

April 29, 2019 – 5:02 a.m. By Erin Bacon, CQ

It wasn't your usual two-week recess. Congress returns today following the release of Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III's redacted report, and lawmakers are coming back to dive deep into the details.

And it won't take long for them to bring in key players — Attorney General William Barr will testify twice this week, before Senate Judiciary on Wednesday (10 a.m., 226 Dirksen) and House Judiciary on Thursday (9 a.m., 2141 Rayburn).

Democrats will want to question him on how he wrote the four-page summary of the Mueller report that he initially sent to Congress, as well as his decision to effectively clear the president of obstruction of justice.

Meanwhile, House Democrats have started following leads laid out in the report to investigate President Donald Trump, Lindsey McPherson reported. Last week, leaders of the six House committees investigating Trump joined a conference call to sketch out their plans.

House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., already issued a subpoena for former White House counsel Don McGahn in response to the report. The subpoena requests McGahn's testimony on May 21 and related documents by next week.

EPA's Draft Groundwater Rules Disappoint Clean Water Advocates

April 25, 2019 – 5:55 p.m. By Jacob Holzman, CQ

The Environmental Protection Agency proposed draft cleanup standards Thursday for groundwater contaminated by so-called forever chemicals, but advocates who urged the adoption of such standards said they were too weak.

The proposal addresses PFAS compounds, which are so slow to degrade they've been nicknamed forever chemicals. The compounds, per- and polyfluoroalkyl, were used for decades in manufacturing products such as cookware, microwave popcorn bags, carpeting, rainwear and fire retardants because they make surfaces resistant to heat, water and staining. They're also included in some firefighting foam used by the military.

Tougher standards previously reported to be in the draft, including the designation of levels that would trigger the distribution of bottled water in communities served by tainted water sources, were not in the interim recommendations released for public comment.

The proposed recommendations did include a provision asserting "responsible parties will address" contamination of groundwater that could become a drinking water source. Critics quickly cited that as evidence polluters may not be required to clean up all contamination.

If adopted, the recommendations would urge federal agencies with jurisdiction over known or potential drinking water sites to clean up contamination to concentrations lower than 70 parts per trillion of two PFAS chemicals.

But the exclusion of an emergency cleanup level, which would have required the distribution of bottled water, may lead to additional scrutiny of whether the Defense Department, which is said to be opposed to such a specification, may have played a role in their absence in the proposal.

Repeatedly taking aim at the Pentagon, Senate Environment and Public Works ranking member Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., said in a news release the guidance "fails to adequately protect public health from this emerging crisis."

"[EPA] Administrator Wheeler said that safe drinking water is the greatest environmental challenge facing our world, yet, again, we see that EPA is not addressing this issue in the manner in which it demands, nor with the urgency in which Americans deserve," Carper said.

(Daily news clips provided by Politico, www.politico.com, CQ Roll Call, www.cq.com)