

POLITICO

T&I has gas left in the tank, Mica says - HSR day: LaHood praises, survey finds support - Landry livens up trucker hearing - Oversight still examining HSR

By [ADAM SNIDER](#) & [BURGESS EVERETT](#) | 07/12/12 9:31 AM EDT

With Jessica Meyers and Kathryn A. Wolfe

T&I WORK FAR FROM DONE, MICA SAYS: Adam sat down with T&I head John Mica yesterday morning and chatted about what's to come. Although the panel could rest on its laurels thanks to passage of major surface transportation and aviation bills this year, there's no signs things will slow down. The panel has hired a new Amtrak investigator, work that also "sets your stage for reforms," Mica said. While a rail bill is a long shot thanks to a wide policy gap with the Senate, T&I will chug along with the investigation and possible hearings. Adam brings Pros the full story on the rest of the year at T&I: <http://politico.pro/L98DhF>

But EPW might have down time: Sen. Jim Inhofe said in a brief interview that he doesn't imagine the EPW Committee will tackle major legislation until November. Inhofe said he'd heard "speculation that maybe we would go right into a WRDA [Water Resources Development Act] bill, but I don't think so." The water bill and a long-stalled measure funding the Public Works and Economic Development Administration are examples of needed legislation, the committee's top Republican said, but now that the transportation bill has been completed, he "can't see anything else meaningful before the election" from the panel.

THE NEXT GENERATION'S PANAMA CANAL: Touting California's recent high-speed rail approval, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said Wednesday that he sees mounting congressional support for the mode. "It's not only President Obama and this administration," he said at an international high-speed rail conference in Philadelphia, "but from Congress. I hear it all the time." LaHood hedged about long-term funding for projects like California's, saying "there will always be competition for money and we'll do the best we can." He focused instead on the mode's potential legacy, calling it this generation's Panama Canal or Golden Gate Bridge. "This high-speed rail program is not going to benefit me," he said. "This is what our generation is going to do for your generation. ...It's not more roads; it's not building more interstates. We've done that. It's high-speed rail."

Chugging along: The oversight committee investigation into the California High-Speed Rail Authority's use of federal money is "still in the early stages" but "moving along," a committee aide told MT. The aide added that a hearing isn't yet on the calendar because the examination is "very detailed." The oversight and transportation committees are Rayburn neighbors, and the aide said the committees are staying in contact regarding the investigation — as they have on topics like GSA and TSA oversight. Rep. Jeff Denham told MT earlier this week that one committee may take the lead to avoid redundancy. Rep. Bill Shuster told MT his rail subcommittee has "talked about doing something," but it was too early to say when.

Poll position: About 62 percent of Americans said they would use potential high-speed train services between metro areas in the United States, according to an APTA survey released yesterday (<http://bit.ly/L9HE5O>). Thirty-five percent of respondents said they would be "very likely" to use fast trains, 27 percent said "likely," and a combined 38 percent said they were "not very likely" or "not at all likely." A majority of those polled also expressed the importance that such trains be more economical than driving and flying. Fifty-five percent said it was important that high-speed rail offer quicker trips than flying, and 47 percent said it was important the trains were faster than driving. The survey was conducted in mid-May and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percent.

Not out of the woods: California's HSR project might have narrowly won approval from the state Legislature, but the fight's not over yet. Reporting on some of the "less-scintillating challenges" than the state Capitol, Mike Rosenberg

lists five pending lawsuits and negotiations with property owners along the route. Mercury News has more: <http://bit.ly/LI1ZZ>

IT'S THANKFULLY THURSDAY. Thanks for reading POLITICO's Morning Transportation, your daily tipsheet on trains, planes, automobiles and bipartisan, common sense solutions that work across the aisle. If it moves, it's news. We'll take your anonymous tips, tidbits and more: beverett@politico.com and asnider@politico.com. Twitter: @AdamKSnider and @BurgessEv. More news: @POLITICOPro and @Morning_Transpo.

“You are a runner with a stolen voice ...” <http://youtu.be/1Y45HYmX5mw>

PARKS & WRECK: Sen. Paul Sarbanes of Maryland may have retired in 2007, but his legacy has lived on in the form of the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program (<http://1.usa.gov/Nhr3Bl>). Until now. A transit- and parks-loving source wrote to inform us that the accessibility program for national parks and wildlife refuges was left off the surface transportation bill. “Maybe we solved all of the transpo problems in our national parks, or maybe we just don’t have a champion in Congress anymore. Either way, it got cut. I’ll choose to think that we solved the problem,” the source told MT.

Newer cities’ transit could get the hammer: Younger transit systems in Minneapolis, San Jose and notably Seattle stand to get hit hard by the transportation bill as compared with their East Coast and Chicago counterparts, TID’s Larry Ehl reports. “The new bill eliminates transit on HOV lanes from the Fixed Guideway funding formula, unless the lanes are used exclusively by transit,” Ehl writes, explaining Seattle’s high transit use of such lanes. That “frees up more funds for the ‘legacy’ modes of transit, such as the subway/light rail/commuter rail systems on the East Coast and in a certain large Midwest city. Senior members of the Senate ... almost certainly were responsible.” Collectively, Puget Sound agencies could lose \$25 million a year. <http://bit.ly/M11Xj5>

KEEP ON TRUCKING: Rep. Jeff Landry’s crusade against a rule requiring electronic recorders on commercial trucks spilled over into yesterday’s hearing on an unrelated trucking issue — putting the administration in the hot seat and causing an impromptu bit of political theater. The kerfuffle over a pending FMCSA rule went down during a hearing before the normally-sleepy House Small Business Committee — and the exchange clearly caught William Bronrott, FMCSA’s deputy administrator, off-guard. Pros, Kathryn has your back: <http://politico.pro/Ni5wIQ>

WHILE WE WAIT: Fundraising numbers are due out early next week, but the numbers are already dribbling out via campaign machinery. Roll Call’s Shira Toeplitz delivers on the Iowa race between transportation heavyweight Reps. Leonard Boswell (a senior T&I Dem) and Tom Latham (THUD appropriations subcommittee chair). Toeplitz reports Latham has \$2.14 million on hand, while “Boswell raised \$300,000 in the most recent quarter, marking his best fundraising report since 2006. But Latham raised \$500,000 during the same period. Boswell will report \$470,000 in the bank.” <http://bit.ly/NhYX9d>

No surprise: Latham is a close friend to Speaker John Boehner, and Boswell told WaPo recently that there’s “no way” he can compete against his opponent financially. Or make that plural: Boswell said he’s taking on Latham, Boehner and “this guy called Karl Rove.”

ADAMS: WHERE’S YOUR INK? Mica opponent Rep. Sandy Adams is spearheading an effort to extend the earmark ban next year; now her campaign is asking where Mica’s signature is. “I will continue to fight for an earmark ban in the 113th Congress, but the question begs to be asked: Would John Mica?” the freshman said in a release. Mica’s campaign told POLITICO that it won’t stoop to Adams’s level. “Congressman Mica will not participate in campaign stunts, especially by someone who personally received \$129 million in earmarks during her time as a state legislator,” said campaign spokesman Alan Byrd. But did Mica ever have a chance to sign the letter? Yep, an Adams aide tells MT. The letter went to all the GOP and Dem offices, so at the very least it came across his staff’s desk in mid-June before going to leadership on June 25, the aide said.

Don’t forget Florida voters: Registration for the Aug. 14 primary election closes on Monday, the Sentinel reminds: <http://thesent.nl/N318OJ>

METRO TO ESTABLISH SERVICE LEVELS: Metro will vote today on a proposal that would establish maximum and minimum headways, among other service levels. By establishing a minimum of passengers getting a train on each line every 15 minutes at peak periods and 30 during off-peak, Metro is seeking to establish more objective standards. Since some lines overlap in the region’s core, the standards are actually more ambitious given the era of single-track

work and 40 minute weekend waits, but less so for rush-hour services, where trains arrive more frequently when Metro is operating smoothly. Check out the proposal: <http://bit.ly/Nhptzy>

Transit community not pleased: Michael Perkins of GGW writes the proposal sets “too low a bar.” Why? Because “the presentation says that the board would delegate authority to the general manager/CEO to make minor service changes based on the service criteria. That could let the GM/CEO reduce service to this unacceptably low level without asking.” <http://bit.ly/NhpB22>

THE AUTOBAHN (SPEED READ)

- Boston’s Big Dig price tag estimated at \$24.3 billion, hurts other state projects. AP: <http://yhoo.it/LfKc6Z>

- Concordia cruise ship captain gives his first interview since crash killed dozens. BBC: <http://bbc.in/NhZUhh>

- In London, Jo Bonner toasts to the Airbus decision. AL.com: <http://bit.ly/NIMnpx>

- Newark, N.J, pop. 277,000, gets its first bike lane. TN: <http://wny.cc/LHZOlb>

- N.Y. MTA wants your feedback on its service. Frugal Empire Staters, you can even win a fare card. <http://bit.ly/L9Pf4n>

MT POLL — To spend or not to spend: Do you approve of California’s plan to spend federal and state money on improving the state’s rail system? Polling closes Sunday at noon. Vote and see results: <http://poll.fm/3smop>

EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME DEVELOPMENT: ICAO has reached agreement on a "metric system," a major milestone in its efforts to develop a new global CO2 emissions standard for aircraft. This system essentially defines how different types of aircraft burning fuel at different rates can be evaluated relative to how they're being flown. Now that ICAO has agreed on how to measure emissions, they will turn to deciding the "appropriate regulatory limit" of emissions, among other things. A4A and Boeing are praising the development. ICAO release: <http://bit.ly/PMLZSH>

WALLET WHACK: The FAA has proposed fines against two airlines that total nearly \$1.2 million, for allegedly flying aircraft that should have had repairs done before being flown. The largest fine, \$987,500, is levied against Delta Air Lines, for two separate planes — one that was allegedly flown with a chip in its nose cone, and another that allegedly had maintenance on a cockpit light socket improperly deferred. The other fine, \$185,750 against Kingfisher Air Services of Puerto Rico, is for allegedly failing to overhaul a plane's engine following pilot reports of overheating.

CABOOSE — Power to the people: As legislation to gut the TSA stalls, Jim Harper of the Cato Institute has taken things into his own hands. “The TSA has not satisfied public concerns about privacy, about costs and delays, security weaknesses, and the potential health effects of these machines. If the government is going to ‘body scan’ Americans at U.S. airports, President Obama should force the TSA to begin the public process the court ordered,” reads Harper’s White House petition, which had garnered about 5,000 signatures as of Monday. The White House will respond if 25,000 signatures arrive by Aug. 8. Check it out: <http://bit.ly/LCqLqq>