

March 24, 2020

TO: USTOA Members
FR: Terry Dale

Please see our COVID-19 Updates for March 24, 2020. These updates are posted on the USTOA website – <https://ustoa.com/covid19>.

Congress

Updates at 7:30pm ET

- Negotiations continued throughout the day today and there is belief that a deal will be announced in the near term, and a vote will be held in the next 24 hours. A small number of outstanding items remain and once a deal is announced, the final agreement will be drafted and released.
- We still believe there will be a deal but our last report from the negotiators indicated that they were “getting closer but still hours away.”
 - Markets were up today, signaling that they believe a deal is close as well.
- Transportation and infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) issued a release today on various items in the House package within his Committee’s jurisdiction. A list of those provisions is attached.
 - It is important to note that we do not anticipate any action on this as the Senate package is likely to be passed.

Updates at 9:30am ET

Senate

- Negotiations between key Senators and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin continued late into the night last night on the third COVID-19 relief package. At this time, an agreement has not yet been announced.
- Senate Minority Leader Schumer and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin last night both expressed optimism that a deal would be reached this morning on the third COVID-19 relief package.
- Senate Majority Leader McConnell filed a second cloture petition to enable the Senate to begin debate on the bill. This sets up a potential procedural vote, under regular order, one hour after the Senate convenes on Wednesday. However, a vote on passage of a bill could be held at any time if an agreement is reached.
- Over the course of the day, major sticking points were unresolved, which included airline grants/conditions on grants, accountability on a \$500B fund, monies for hospitals, among other matters.

House

- House Democrats officially introduced their relief package yesterday. The bill, H.R. 6379, is over 1,400 pages.
- The House package would:
 - Boost emergency funds for agencies;
 - Mandate “green” rules for airlines and provide \$40 billion in grants for airlines and contractors and up to \$21 billion in loans for airlines;
 - Specifically, the text calls for airlines seeking federal assistance to reduce their overall carbon emissions by 50 percent by 2050.
 - Address union concerns, including a provision that requires airlines to give unions a seat on their boards;
 - Eliminate payroll tax suspension;
 - Provide more help for hospitals, schools, and food banks than the Senate GOP counterpart measure;
 - Would increase the payments that would go directly to Americans from \$1200 (Senate GOP proposal) to \$1500 per person;
 - Provide \$10 billion in airport grants, \$1 million in Amtrak grants, \$25 billion in transit grants, and \$3 million for a new “Office of Airline Industry Financial Oversight.”
- House Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern (D-MA) has determined that remote voting is not a viable option and is recommending that the House pass the third package by Unanimous Consent to keep members away from Washington, DC.
- Representatives Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) and Ilhan Omar (D-MN) have introduced legislation that would cancel monthly payments for those with student debts and would guarantee that each borrower receives at least \$30,000 worth of debt cancellation.

General

- Various industries continued to call on lawmakers yesterday to provide economic relief for the solar, wind, coal, and advanced energy industries through tax incentives and other relief/benefits.
- The auto industry is requesting assistance, asking specifically for a delay of USMCA implementation and loans for companies. Three leading trade associations, the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, the National Automobile Dealers Association and the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association sent a joint letter to congressional leaders on Monday asking for help, including loans and loan guarantees for employers of all sizes and a tax credit to offset paid leave for employees.

Administration

Updates at 7:30pm ET

- The President during the evening press conference reiterated his desire to loosen restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 outbreak by Easter.

- Dr. Birx clarified that the self-swabbing that will be available will allow individuals to gather their own sample, not test themselves. The sample would still need to be sent to a lab for testing, though the self-swab would allow for personal protective equipment to be conserved.
- Businesses who are interested in accessing SBA funds either that are already available or might become available as a result of COVID-19 relief packages can review the industry-specific criteria for eligibility [here](#).
- Though policies have been in place already, agencies officially posted a number of COVID-19 policies in the Federal Register today including:
 - Official notices for the travel restrictions between US and Canada and US and Mexico:
 - [Temporary Travel Restrictions Applicable to Land Ports of Entry and Ferries Service between the United States and Canada](#)
 - [Notification of Temporary Travel Restrictions Applicable to Land Ports of Entry and Ferries Service Between the United States and Mexico](#)
 - No Sail Order and Suspension on Further Embarkation for Cruise Ships, that went into effect on March 14:
 - No Sail Order and Suspension of Further Embarkation

Updates at 9:30am ET

- The President announced Monday that the Federal Government would be extending the compliance deadline for REAL ID, which has been a big worry for the travel industry. The October 1, 2020 deadline will be moved to an unknown date at this time. However, House Democrats proposed moving the deadline to October 2021 in their draft legislation.
- Domestic airlines are reportedly discussing plans to potentially shut down nearly all passenger flights in the United States. Government agencies are also weighing mandating such a shut down amid a steep drop in passenger volumes and as the air traffic control system continues to be affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor announced Tuesday morning that the Administration would be using the Defense Production Act (DPA) for the first time to allow the government to access about 60,000 test kits. He added that the Administration would also insert DPA language into the mass contracts for the Federal government's order of 500 million personal protective masks.
- President Trump announced during yesterday's press conference that he is considering loosening some of the stricter social distancing and isolation measures currently in place, allowing different tiers to ease Americans back into normal life after the 15-day period that ends next Monday.
 - People with underlying health issues or in the highest risk age range will likely be asked to stick with isolation.
 - Others may be encouraged to get back into a more normal routine.

- Uber sent a letter to the Administration, and Congress, urging that drivers continue to be classified as independent contractors, as opposed to employees.

Other News

Updates at 7:30pm ET

- Ford, GM, and GE Healthcare are producing ventilators to meet the need for these medical devices to help those infected with COVID-19.
- The American Hotel and Lodging Association reports that as of mid-March 2020, the hotel industry supported nearly 2.3 million jobs directly and over 8.3 million jobs total nationwide. According to research conducted by Oxford Economics, 44 percent of hotel employees in every state are projected to have lost or will lose their jobs in coming weeks because of the coronavirus outbreak. A statewide breakdown of these job losses can be found in the attached chart.
- The World Health Organization warned that the U.S. could become the new epicenter of the pandemic as more than 50,000 cases were reported. More than 600 people have died from the virus in the U.S., according to Johns Hopkins University.
- Reports are indicating the first known death of a juvenile from COVID-19 in the United States.
- The Navy today reported three coronavirus cases aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, which is deployed in the Pacific.

Updates at 9:30am ET

- Florida announced restrictions yesterday on passengers from New York and New Jersey in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. People traveling from those two states to Florida will undergo further screening, temperature checks, and a mandatory quarantine.
- 144 American and Canadian citizens were flown home on an MD-80 that took off from a small airport in Honduras yesterday.
- Boeing announced that it will be suspending production at its facilities around Puget Sound in Washington state for two weeks to both clean the facilities and protect employees from COVID-19. Production is expected to fully halt on Wednesday. Employees who are not able to telework will receive paid leave for 10 days.
- The State of Florida is investigating allegations against Norwegian Cruise Lines regarding potential deceptive practices and sales pitches amidst COVID-19.
- Japan's prime minister announced that he had reached an agreement with the International Olympic Committee to postpone the Summer Olympics for a year.