July 8, 2020

TO: USTOA Members

FR: Terry Dale

Below is our COVID-19 Updates for July 7 & 8, 2020:

**Congress**

**Updates from July 8, 2020**

**Senate**

* Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) issued a statement disagreeing with President Trump’s decision to exit the World Health Organization (WHO). Sen. Alexander said that though the WHO has made mistakes in the past, now is not the time to exit the world’s unified health body. Additionally, Sen. Alexander said that exiting the WHO during a pandemic would have adverse effects on the world and America. The statement can be found [here](https://www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=23A2C93C-72D0-4C7E-8F34-ACDEC1B7F0FF).

**House**

* House Appropriations Subcommittees continued to markup Fiscal Year 2021 funding bills today. Below are the figures and statuses for the three subcommittees that considered legislation today:
  + - [Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (HUD)](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-transportation-housing-and): $158.3B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Financial Services](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-financial-services-and): $24.64B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-commerce-justice-science): $71.473B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
      * $61B in emergency funding is slated to go to building better broadband infrastructure and phasing Huawei gear out of American markets.
    - [Defense](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-defense-funding-bill): $694.6B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
  + As a reminder, we reported on the following eight bills yesterday:
    - [Agriculture-Food and Drug Administration (FDA):](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-agriculture-rural-development) $23.98B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
      * The committee report is available [here](https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/Ag%20Report%20received%207-2-20.pdf).
    - [Energy and Water Development](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-energy-and-water-development): $49.6B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Homeland Security](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-homeland-security-funding): $50.72B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
      * The bill did not include any funding for the border wall and rescinded the Department of Homeland Security’s ability to transfer funds between different departments.
    - [Interior-Environment](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-interior-environment-funding): $36.76B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Legislative Branch](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-legislative-branch-funding): $4.19B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Military Construction and Veterans Affairs](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-military-construction-and): $250.9B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
      * The committee report is available [here](https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/Milcon%20VA%20FY%2021%20Report%20Full%20Comm%20Print.pdf).
    - [State and Foreign Operations](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-state-and-foreign-operations): $65.87B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
      * The committee report is available [here](https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/2020-07-03%20SFOPS%20Report%20Full%20Committee.pdf).
    - [Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS)-Education](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-labor-hhs-education-funding): $196.5B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
* The House Appropriations Committee released top-level discretionary spending limits, also known as 302(b) allocations, for each subcommittee. These allocations are used to guide spending on each subcommittee’s appropriations legislation but are determined by the full committee leadership. The allocations for Fiscal Year 2021 are:
  + Agriculture-FDA: $24B
  + Commerce-Justice-Science: $71.5B
  + Defense: $626.2B
  + Energy and Water Development: $49.6B
  + Financial Services: $24.6B
  + Homeland Security: $50.7B
  + Interior-Environment: $36.8B
  + Labor-HHS-Education: $182.9B
  + Legislative Branch: $5.3B
  + Military Construction-Veterans Affairs: $102.6B
  + State and Foreign Operations: $47.9B
  + Transportation-HUD: $75.9B
* House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Jim Jordan (R-OH) wrote a letter to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler (D-NY) requesting that the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law hearing that will feature the CEOs of Amazon, Apple, Google and Facebook be moved to the full committee. Jordan argued that having it at the subcommittee level excluded more Republican members from attending the hearing. The letter can be found [here](https://twitter.com/judiciarygop/status/1280639252678807553?s=21).
* The House Homeland Security Committee held a hearing entitled “Examining the National Response to the Worsening Coronavirus Pandemic.” The hearing discussed the Federal Government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as how state and local governments are handling the pandemic. Our coverage of the hearing can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/7-8-20-house-homeland-security-hearing-on-impacts-of-covid-19.pdf). The witnesses were:
  + Hon. Jay Robert "J. B." Pritzker, Governor, Illinois
  + Hon. Jason Shelton, Mayor, City of Tupelo, Mississippi
  + Umair A. Shah, M.D., M.P.H., Executive Director and Local Health Authority of Harris County Public Health, Texas
  + Col. (ret.) Brian Hastings, Director, Alabama Emergency Management Agency
* The House Financial Services Committee held a hearing yesterday entitled “Paycheck Security: Economic Perspectives on Alternative Approaches to Protecting Workers’ Pay during COVID-19.” Our coverage of the hearing can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/7-8-20-house-financial-services-hearing-on-paycheck-security.pdf). The witnesses were:
  + Lisa D. Cook, Professor, Department of Economics, James Madison College, Michigan State University
  + Lily Eskelsen García, President, National Education Association
  + Joseph Stiglitz, Professor of Economics, Columbia University
  + Diego Zuluaga, Associate Director of Financial Regulation Studies, Cato Institute

**Updates from July 7, 2020**

The House and Senate are in recess until July 20.

**Senate**

* Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said that the next COVID-19 relief package could include another round of direct payments to individuals. However, Leader McConnell said that the payments would be targeted toward people who make less than $40,000 per year. Negotiations have not begun yet on the scope of the next bill, both at a staff level and at a Member level. Right now, Elevate’s intelligence suggests that Senate Republicans remain focused on a narrow bill, while Senate and House Democrats want broader relief measures.
  + The White House supports Leader McConnell’s previous goal of keeping the next COVID-19 relief package under $1T, though there is recognition that it could cost more. Other White House priorities that have potential for bipartisan support in the next package include:
    - Ending surprise medical billing, although the issue remains controversial;
    - Price transparency for pharmaceutical products; and
    - Changing the reimbursement rate for telemedicine.
  + Relief for state and local governments, continued unemployment benefits and liability protections for companies will likely be the major points of contention as Congress considers the next COVID-19 relief package at the end of the month.
* Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) announced plans to introduce legislation banning the sale of middle seats by airlines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation, while banning the sale of middle seats, does not provide compensation for the requirement.
* Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) said they will not attend the Republican National Convention due to concerns about COVID-19.

**House**

* On Monday, House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-MS) and Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee Chairman Lou Correa (D-CA), sent a letter to Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Administrator David Pekoske asking that TSA issue a requirement for airline passengers to wear masks to pass through security. The letter stated that 1,000 TSA employees have contracted COVID-19. The press release can be found [here](https://homeland.house.gov/news/correspondence/thompson-and-correa-call-on-tsa-to-make-masks-mandatory) and the letter can be found [here](https://homeland.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-07-06%20T%20TSA%20-%20Masks.pdf).
* The House Committee on Education and Labor Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment held a hearing entitled: “A Major Test: Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Future of Higher Education.” The hearing discussed issues regarding higher education and the COVID-19 pandemic including reopening, the transition to online education and budget cuts. Our coverage can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/7-7-20-house-education-and-labor-hearing-on-covid-19-and-higher-education.pdf). The witnesses were:
  + Ms. Sharon J. Pierce, Ed.D., M.S.N., President, Minneapolis College;
  + Mr. Timothy P. White, Ph.D, Chancellor, The California State University;
  + Mr. Scott Pulsipher, President, Western Governors University;
  + Mr. Shaun Harper, Ph.D., President, American Educational Research Association.
* House Appropriations Subcommittees continued consideration of their respective legislation today. Topline figures and summaries are below. Additionally, we updated the status of the various pieces of legislation as of the writing of this update:
  + [Transportation-Housing and Urban Development](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-transportation-housing-and): $158.3B
  + [Financial Services](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-financial-services-and): $24.64B
  + [Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-commerce-justice-science): $71.473B
  + [Defense](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-defense-funding-bill): $694.6B
  + As a reminder, we reported on the following eight bills yesterday:
    - [Agriculture-Food and Drug Administration (FDA):](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-agriculture-rural-development) $23.98B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Energy and Water Development](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-energy-and-water-development): $49.6B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Homeland Security](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-homeland-security-funding): $50.72B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
      * The bill did not include any funding for the border wall and rescinded the Department of Homeland Security’s ability to transfer funds between different departments.
    - [Interior-Environment](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-interior-environment-funding): $36.76B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Legislative Branch](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-legislative-branch-funding): $4.19B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Military Construction and Veterans Affairs](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-military-construction-and): $250.9B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [State and Foreign Operations](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-state-and-foreign-operations): $65.87B
      * Advanced to the full committee.
    - [Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS)-Education](https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2021-labor-hhs-education-funding): $196.5B
      * Advanced to the full committee.

**General Congress**

* + Amtrak continues to be criticized for recent announcements of scheduled cuts and workforce reductions. Multiple Senators have sent letters to Amtrak expressing concerns over the rollbacks after Amtrak received $1B in emergency COVID-19 aid.
  + [One letter](https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/E8C4D6F3-AB7B-4C1F-8526-275916FD6EDA) was led by Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-MS);
    - Sens. Jerry Moran (R-KS), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Ron Johnson (R-WI) signed onto the letter.
  + [One letter](https://www.daines.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Letter%20to%20Amtrak%20FY21%20PDF.pdf) was led by Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT); and
    - Sens. Mike Braun (R-IN), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), John Hoeven (R-ND), Tom Udall (D-NM), and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) signed onto the letter.
  + [One letter](https://www.tester.senate.gov/files/Letters/2020-06-23%20Amtrak%20Supplemental%20Letter%20Final.pdf) was led by Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT).
    - Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Joe Manchin (D-WV), and Jacky Rosen (D-NV) signed onto the letter.

**Administration**

**Updates from July 8, 2020**

* President Trump threatened that schools would lose their Federal funding if they refused to reopen in the fall. President Trump also said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) guidelines for opening schools were too restrictive.
* Vice President Mike Pence, along with the White House Coronavirus Task Force, announced at a press conference that the CDC would issue updated recommendations next week regarding school re-openings.
* According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), trade discussions will begin today between the United States and Kenya. If an agreement is reached, it would mark the first time the United States will have a trade deal with a sub-Saharan African nation. As we have indicated, a trade deal with Kenya could serve as a blueprint for future deals.
* The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Justice are investigating TikTok and other Chinese social media apps over their data practices. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed concerns about TikTok’s link to the Chinese government and its collection of user data.
* President Trump publicly threatened a ban on the app’s use in the U.S. As a reminder, India banned the use of TikTok, along with 59 other Chinese apps, last week.
* The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (FRBB) announced that the Main Street Lending Program is fully operational, and lenders are ready to begin purchasing eligible loans. Additionally, the FRBB announced that they will publish a state specific list of registered lenders who are accepting customers under the loans. A press release can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.bostonfed.org%2fnews-and-events%2fpress-releases%2f2020%2fboston-fed-announces-main-street-lending-program-is-fully-operational.aspx&c=E,1,gkJ7cC_K1Mi1MHSg5NCH7S1xocBAmLHLh_Kk2r5d-FTOJKi7hO9Hh9aDUhswl-gyah8Hep9wAmi2AgEED9xhYAwl2hKsiL4RXTNXKy1_VqM,&typo=1).
* Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) sued Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) over their new guidance targeting international students.
* As a reminder, ICE released guidance that would require any international student enrolled at a university that is solely online in the fall to transfer or ICE would require them to leave the United States.
* Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador visited the White House to celebrate the recently implemented U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declined to attend, as we noted yesterday.
* A Federal District Court judge on Wednesday (Southern District of New York) declined to hear a lawsuit from environmental groups that would force companies to publicly disclose any failures to comply with environmental laws due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
* As a reminder, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued guidance that relaxed enforcement actions on companies who were not complying with laws due to the pandemic. The EPA asked for companies to make up any missed deadlines as soon as possible.
* Top Trump Administration officials have strongly suggested they will extend the COVID-19 public health emergency before it expires later this month. The declaration has helped state and local health departments deploy personnel funded by the federal government to focus on responding to the pandemic and has allowed flexibility for government health insurance programs like Medicare and Medicaid.
* According to the Inspector General for the Department of the Treasury, approximately 46,000 people accidentally received two economic stimulus payments, which cost the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) $69M. The IRS now is attempting to get the money back.
* **Federal Register Notices:**
* The Department of Energy issued a request for information on securing the United States Bulk-Power System. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f08%2f2020-14668%2fsecuring-the-united-states-bulk-power-system&c=E,1,Kq792_-0baJ4QfUKdvT8ewAuxeIOtEBb4Mt2F6fip0-do7ZWZ2s8eGrfLE1s1FCKG6uNLynIRTpfL_P7_dhsGFU9ZpYFTMOqbPiGarLpVIHUy6woeePNl4McbJIn&typo=1).
* The EPA and Department of Transportation (DOT) posted a final rule and correction on the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule for model years 2021-2026 on Passenger Cars and Light Trucks. The rule can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f08%2f2020-14642%2fthe-safer-affordable-fuel-efficient-safe-vehicles-rule-for-model-years-2021-2026-passenger-cars-and&c=E,1,z5HjVoWvGtWQdtdM6MfCxMu_8E2CP86zEt5qaUXmGLqXNHX1Hqs4xZxhFbwEwYD4hqmPv1d93tXxVd0YwWcAXptMz21Mzbmt_mmJY3h4LPV9Vgyoxas,&typo=1).
* The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and DOT posted a notice of public meeting for the Women in Aviation Advisory Board. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f08%2f2020-14720%2fwomen-in-aviation-advisory-board-notice-of-public-meeting&c=E,1,anSwpUQHPABy1OXRMcKH14igZyq9qSBf63vrKsbc17xmXdvzDgF5g--8kGYNtw10hQzT8T2jsx8U7M_6zVXZ46Kamq90xBGd6GFLHQxvhx6zLaKkEzwVw04IbhJy&typo=1).
* The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) posted a notice of a technical conference on the impact of COVID-19 on the energy industry. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f08%2f2020-14667%2fimpacts-of-covid-19-on-the-energy-industry-supplemental-notice-of-technical-conference&c=E,1,W8O0lRQB-lyfYU3gjj0lnXS_oPIsEPj_tp-fdZEqvT7cldJ4YyxAh-CFnyauiegxZqK-zruKJAnsohoYeeLTzMxJu-t6VLI7nsu0QHG8PnB2&typo=1).
* The Maritime Administration and DOT posted a notice of a public meeting of the U.S. Maritime Transportation System National Advisory Committee. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f08%2f2020-14684%2fus-maritime-transportation-system-national-advisory-committee-notice-of-public-meeting-correction&c=E,1,99AFBKrcey4_nY-iUnm28ae0TO6yH9GGi6qDsG0S9JCgdLsUjC3Fnc-hhhOgcaPpXeRxerbBBVQcPLJyot3iYz8WBl91GmBoePQ5PVWvTjIh4rZDrhQ,&typo=1).
* The Treasury Department issued a notice and request for comment on the Multiemployer Pension Plan Application to Reduce Benefits. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f08%2f2020-14713%2fmultiemployer-pension-plan-application-to-reduce-benefits&c=E,1,p6Jp5gEp3Ss_bSXQOussbCCX0RlqHF_Yyyxe27vTNcG5X3uWZJQd7KPXLpLhcQ-a2XJBvMxCJrxbXdQnlZXNRRRrVGKWLt3MYfFT8uYmoG5A&typo=1).

**Updates from July 7, 2020**

* The White House is exploring multiple Executive Orders (EOs) targeting China. One would focus on Chinese business interests within the U.S. and another would target trade with Hong Kong. Specific details on the EO have not been released.
* The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published [Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 20012](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USAFAA/2020/07/07/file_attachments/1490443/SAFO20012.pdf) on “Continuation of Air Carrier and Other Operations in Terminal Airspace when an Air Traffic Control (ATC) Facility with Responsibility for That Controlled Airspace Closes Unexpectedly.” The SAFO specifically alerts air carriers and commercial operators of increased risk while operating in airspace around an airport tower when ATC operations have unexpectedly closed due to COVID-19.
  + FAA also added Passenger Boarding (Enplanement) and All-Cargo Data for U.S. Airports to its website today. That information can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.faa.gov%2fairports%2fplanning_capacity%2fpassenger_allcargo_stats%2fpassenger%2f&c=E,1,icGVXSozMNkSn8Di0xsJfnxDUion5MLRqWJEBEFBnrMhZw9Z5rI-aiif7oT_kLo4ULVk4jTzrpsi5wiBm6Gts9HzXEOqu0F45xH3UrZ4aIEsQjCoO-voOdj7O2o,&typo=1).
* The National Park Service (NPS) announced $750,000 in Underrepresented Community Grants to support the identification and nomination of sites to the National Register of Historic Places. For the list of sites that received grants, click [here](https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/07-07-20-nps-awards-750-000-in-underrepresented-community-grants.htm).
* The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced Monday that it had reached a settlement with the online gaming site Miniclip, alleging that the site misrepresented its adherence to a program that monitors platforms’ compliance with a federal privacy act known as COPPA (the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act).
* Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Dan Brouillette issued an order on Monday that authorized exports from a proposed Jordan Cove natural gas terminal in Oregon. This would be the first project to ship liquid natural gas from the West Coast.
* **Federal Register Notices:**
  + The Coast Guard posted a notice of a Federal Advisory Committee teleconference meeting of the National Maritime Security Advisory Committee. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f07%2f2020-14571%2fnational-maritime-security-advisory-committee&c=E,1,zidSSBUZoZh9QfLYdGxMImczbztDVI71poTZ_o3lZiXbPhG14SUi9IJ3bYGfCfGJwzgnsLwKtYbtoROaotB_tKttcF3lt0_bIzA20wSDFQGJJ6vjH19dWEMl&typo=1).
  + The Department of Education posted a notice and request for comments on Education Stabilization Fund-Reimagine Workforce Preparation Grants. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f07%2f2020-14470%2fagency-information-collection-activities-submission-to-the-office-of-management-and-budget-for&c=E,1,l40C0K6iobd8nMOLJRJHZvqFrfTflsvjGT88CIECfSI9CJROZ87YVTPIlfnWWOVPdh4NjzYUrsVeSbxFNE0NCEUxLAOhvrW4ifHr1U6fXfkYRb-WxMsKkT2RKio,&typo=1).
  + The Department of Education posted a notice and request for comments on Equitable Services to Students and Teachers in Non-Public Schools. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f07%2f2020-14550%2fagency-information-collection-activities-comment-request-cares-act-programs-equitable-services-to&c=E,1,-ISw3TJukkTHk0Z5yR-wUbVcMKi80j9C9Ckx-6wINacSiSL3c8lBg98d404jM3WSsLKm_za2sfH-7GKYtvUDKCTbmQAkT3JEGtgF_TT5Qj2T7B8yHw,,&typo=1).
  + The Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) posted a request for nominations for the EXIM Advisory Committee. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f07%2f2020-14472%2fadvisory-committee-request-for-nominations&c=E,1,fM-7t_zcFc2gGVWoz9CBcqvKJwSgU30HehpDe9qx2lEDSEmskccNR0xhQWdjKDyQVSrD3mKtOGT0hFeaeO2L3KKjGBiRwRKw6l2uWQGnP7_im9Q,&typo=1).
  + FAA and DOT posted a notice and request for comments on the National Flight Data Center Web Portal. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f07%2f07%2f2020-14542%2fagency-information-collection-activities-requests-for-comments-clearance-of-renewed-approval-of&c=E,1,xLw_K9rxXHVHs6onzGsY3TbOwrsrvBhkPjrpVJBNdf9obq4I0njczVIYx6qhgGgls4PtuIS1E19io-XdsDiBVYqDL-if-DtHBd_qmkp8GGEHqir-5vG-yjOzQ7hz&typo=1).

**Other News**

**Updates from July 8, 2020**

* The United States surpassed 3M COVID-19 cases. In nearly 40 states, COVID-19 cases are on the rise. On June 11, the COVID-19 case count for the country was 2M. With cases spreading quickly across states like Texas, Florida, California, and Arizona, the number of cases is expected to continue to rise.
* Arizona is seeing the worst of COVID-19 in the U.S, as new data from the week of June 30reported 55 cases per 100,000 people per day, which is more than 30% worse than Florida and more than double that of Texas. On a national scale, those figures were more than triple the U.S average.
* Over the July 4 weekend, air travel was up 90% in the United States compared to last month. However, air travel was still down 70% compared to the same time in 2019.
* United Airlines announced Wednesday that up to 36,000 employees, or 45% of its U.S-based workforce, could be furloughed in the fall. This translates to 15,000 flight attendants, 11,000 customer service and gate agents, 5,500 maintenance or technical operations employees and 2,250 pilots. Employees will not actually know if they are personally impacted until mid-to-late August. These numbers could change in either direction, though, depending on U.S air travel in the coming months.
* United received about $5B in payroll assistance from the CARES Act.
* Yesterday, Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Lines announced their Healthy Sail Panel, a group of leaders in public health, hospitality, and other sectors that will work to strengthen current procedures and develop new ones across the entire cruise experience.
* The United States Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to House Appropriations leaders outlining their priorities in the legislation that funds the State Department and other foreign aid programs. The letter can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/chamber-of-commerce-letter-7-8.pdf).
* Kenya nominated [Ms. Amina Mohamed](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.wto.org%2fenglish%2fthewto_e%2fdg_e%2fdgsel20_e%2fbio_ken_e.pdf&c=E,1,el0TreYSJO_jcR2tdpAk9mxRCz76fnBMgnQYA7AJs4JCod9jFTKw3l_ncomQBfetwzFa4oB2o_XDSTHySsseMMt7Rt7Vdwv87kVI4wWgLneEcXs,&typo=1), Kenya’s Minister of Sports, Heritage and Culture, to be the next World Trade Organization (WTO) Director General. Mohamed is the third African and eighth person to be nominated for the position. Two other people were also nominated for the WTO position today:
* [Mr. Mohammad Maziad Al-Tuwaijri](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.wto.org%2fenglish%2fthewto_e%2fdg_e%2fdgsel20_e%2fbio_sau_e.pdf&c=E,1,Dc5Bk-JWWmVwSRp1gOXxRFRDidrF0yK_TEeToBD5vgaINGgvHVBRd4wyUG_gHHWOSa5s86mTXBwGSs_yu_YVW1XnMw1pWC8c6-bmAU_Y-Vd398LI&typo=1) of Saudi Arabia, a former Minister of Economy and Planning, who now works at the Royal Court.
* [Dr. Liam Fox](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.wto.org%2fenglish%2fthewto_e%2fdg_e%2fdgsel20_e%2fbio_gbr_e.pdf&c=E,1,shLf6NfzZMZyqhrERsJL9uBa-0dbL7zES7qnXOtcpTJpeWGynsR9nPbHusq4JFOOLK3h7AIMptA92uZVdzsxicnWgCviqh2rpDaSH9Pjlg,,&typo=1) of the United Kingdom, a former UK Secretary of State for International trade and a pro-Brexit Conservative Member of Parliament.
  + Nominations for the Director General position closed today at 6pm Geneva time.
* Indonesia applied a 10% value added tax (VAT) to companies like Amazon, Google, Netflix and Spotify on Tuesday. This new tax will be enforced on any online company that collects at least 600M Rupiah (around $41,000 in American dollars) or have at least 12,000 users in the country. Notably, Indonesia is seen as a potential digital economy star, with some studies estimating that their online economy will be worth around $120B by 2025.
* The Inspector General for Amtrak released a report today that determined that the national rail company still has a lot to improve upon regarding its police department. The report stated that the role of the police department had yet to be firmly established. The report recommended that Amtrak use multiple data points in order to best determine the role and size of their police department. The report can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/amtrak-ig-report.pdf).
* The American Primary Aluminum Association sent a letter to President Trump asking him to reinstate a 10% tariff on aluminum imported from China. The letter said that Canadian subsidies on metal production has caused imports of Canadian aluminum to rise 80%. The letter can be found [here](https://mma.prnewswire.com/media/1201447/APAA_Letter_to_President_Donald_J_Trump_7th_July_2020.pdf?p=pdf).
* Deutsche Telekom, one of Europe’s largest telecom providers, has come under fire from German politicians over new reports on its close relationship with Chinese 5G vendor Huawei. Both liberal and conservative politicians have expressed discomfort with these reports.

**Updates from July 7, 2020**

* COVID-19 cases continue to rapidly increase in the U.S. and states are responding by mandating masks and halting reopening plans. Since the beginning of July, close to 300,000 new cases have been reported in the U.S.
  + Hospitalizations are increasing and personal protective equipment (PPE) for hospital workers is running low again.
  + However, cases are not growing across the board. Virginia reported no new COVID-19 related deaths on Monday for the first time since April. In the region including the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, 659 cases were reported Monday, the lowest daily increase since April 3.
* Alaska Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, United Airlines and Southwest Airlines agreed to terms for loans from the Department of Treasury to help them recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.
  + We previously reported that American Airlines, Spirit Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, SkyWest Airlines and Frontier Airlines also agreed to terms for loans last week.
* According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.cbpp.org%2fblog%2fstate-borrowing-cant-substitute-for-more-direct-aid-to-cope-with-recession&c=E,1,aIQkElrCPeDaK0T1G6UQi4yBYPDaZct_uOnWm826mjPnn3tJE7SBmL3tXAaK5YCODD4gZmrcHAcaA5swkYcL4Kck2_FpsQwWYK5bMvHcGjfL3g,,&typo=1), states could face a collective budget shortfall of up to $615B over three fiscal years due to COVID-19.
* The Supreme Court on Monday ruled that unsolicited robocalls to cell phones will continue to be banned. Political consultants, who brought the lawsuit, argued that a debt collection exception to the blanket robocall ban put in place by the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court majority eliminated the exception for debt collection but upheld the overall ban.
* Numerous companies throughout the transportation industry received loans under the Paycheck Protection Program, according to new data released by the Small Business Administration (SBA) yesterday. A modal breakdown of the relief is as follows:
  + Almost 11,000 trucking companies received loans that totaled more than $3.5B, which helped save more than 440,000 jobs.
  + In the maritime industry, a wide range of companies, from shipping and barge companies to ferry and regional cruise lines, received at least $212M, which saved 19,000 jobs.
  + Rail transportation companies, most of which are smaller freight railroads or rail service or support firms, were given at least $48M, which led to the 5,000 jobs being kept.
  + In transit and passenger transportation, such as bus lines and commuter rail, around $100M was given, which led to 15,000 people keeping their jobs.
    - Proterra, an electric bus manufacturer, received between $5-$10M.
  + Air transportation companies received at least $343M in loans, securing at least 60,000 jobs.
    - Of note, most of the air transportation businesses that received loans were smaller businesses that offered general aviation services, airport support, or training.
* Retail Industry Leaders Association President Brian Dodge sent a [letter](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2frilastagemedia.blob.core.windows.net%2frila-web%2frila.web%2fmedia%2fmedia%2fpdfs%2fletters%2520to%2520hill%2f2020%2fsafety-is-essential-bd-letter-to-governors-7-6-2020.pdf&c=E,1,m3klZ9TWooWcaxw9o2ziFi85Y-E-Bp_869xK-ifeObLiLcMvuLsA5YsEm2XAlW0BO3Wh9CTXmnnZMF9JjIe3BKGycVLTKhZpWBIc14HORC__iDp1cGCD&typo=1) on Monday to Governors Larry Hogan (R-MD) and Andrew Cuomo (D-NY), respectively the chair and vice chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), asking that Governors mandate customers wear masks in retail stores nationwide.
* A bipartisan group of former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DOT heads filed a legal brief criticizing the Trump Administration’s revocation of California’s fuel economy waiver. The brief said the revocation had “no valid legal, factual, or logical basis.” The officials on the brief included former Transportation Secretaries Federico Peña, Rodney Slater, Norman Mineta, Ray LaHood and Anthony Foxx, and former EPA Administrators William Reilly, Carol Browner, Christine Todd Whitman and Lisa Jackson. The brief can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/epa-dot-heads-brief.pdf).
* New York State Attorney General Letitia James mandated that the California-based Black Lives Matter Foundation, which is unaffiliated with the Black Lives Matter movement, stop collecting donations in New York.
* The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business and agricultural groups on Monday defined in a letter what could make the Phase 1 trade deal between the United States and China go smoothly. The letter articulated that for Phase 1 to be a success, there needs to be a renewed effort to purchase U.S. manufactured goods, energy products, aircraft, autos and auto parts, services, and agricultural goods. Without this happening, the business groups said, it would be much more difficult to agree on a Phase 2 agreement, which would handle more challenging issues such as cybersecurity, digital trade and data governance and competition policy. The letter can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/letter-from-business-groups-to-mnuchin.pdf).
* A coalition of 100 business groups led by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) sent a letter to the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees asking for a fix to a “costly drafting error” in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) implementation bill. The provision, which is found in Section 205 of the USMCA Implementation Act, allows companies to receive a refund for the government merchandise processing fee at the time of their import. However, the USMCA provision prevents companies from filing a post-importation claim. The letter can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/nam-letter.pdf).
* A number of significant decisions have emerged regarding pipelines over the last few days.
  + The Supreme Court reinstated the Army Corps of Engineers’ Nationwide Permit 12 to allow new oil and gas pipelines, except the Keystone XL pipeline, to be built. The Keystone XL pipeline, which was the subject of the original lawsuit that rose to the Supreme Court, had held up construction on almost 70 mostly minor pipeline projects.
  + On Sunday, Dominion Energy and Duke Energy ended plans for the 600-mile long Atlantic Coast Pipeline after a decision out of Montana Federal court blocked a key water permit for the already over-budget project.
  + On Monday, the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia issued a ruling that the Dakota Access Pipeline must be emptied until the Army Corps of Engineers completes an environmental impact review that was never completed.
* The period for countries to nominate a candidate to lead the World Trade Organization (WTO) ends Wednesday. Typically, the process of selecting a new WTO Director General takes 9 months. So far, the following five people have been nominated:
  + Mr. Jesús Seade Kuri of Mexico
  + Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria
  + Mr. Abdel-Hamid Mamdouh of Egypt
  + Mr. Tudor Ulianovschi of Moldova
  + Ms. Yoo Myung-hee of South Korea