

# CCIA HIGHLIGHTS *of the week*

A weekly information bulletin for members of the Connecticut Construction Industries Association

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**DEBATE IN THE HOUSE** on a bill to establish electronic tolling in Connecticut was postponed this week after proponents reportedly decided they did not have the votes to pass the measure ([HB 6058](#)), according to an [article](#) in *CT News Junkie*. The bill would not generate any revenue over the next two years, but House Democratic leaders see it as inevitable and the fairest way to repair the state's crumbling highways and bridges. ConnDOT has estimated that it would take 3 or 4 years to re-establish tolls, but Transportation Committee chair Rep. Tony Guerrera and House Speaker Joe Aresimowicz said it could happen within 18 months or 2 years. Gov. Malloy said this week that any discussion of tolls "should wait until there's a lock box."

**A NEW STATE TRANSPORTATION** Policy Advisory Council would be created to, among other things, "develop and recommend policies for improving transportation planning and the selection of transportation projects," under an amendment to HB 7138, An Act Concerning Legislative Oversight of Major Transportation Projects and Planning. The bill, as amended by [House Amendment 8505](#), passed the House this week by a vote of 81 to 67. The council's members would be comprised of both legislative and executive branch officials. The bill would give the council oversight over any capital project "that expands the capacity on a limited access highway, transit or railroad system or parking facility or is estimated to cost one hundred fifty million dollars or more." The bill now moves to the Senate.

**CCIA ISSUED AN URGENT** Legislative Alert this week asking members to [contact Senate Republican Leader Len Fasano](#) urging him to withdraw an amendment which was filed on SB 985. The amendment is currently attached to SB 790, An Act Concerning Improvements to the State Contracting Standards Board, on the Senate Calendar. The [amendment](#) would prohibit every state or quasi-public entity from executing public works contracts over \$500,000 unless it obtains an affidavit stating that any principal or key personnel of the entity submitting a bid or proposal attesting whether they have been convicted of, entered a plea of nolo contendere for, or admitted to, a public entity crime related to procurement or performance of any contract.

**THE BILL TO EXTEND** the deadline for approval of Public Private Partnership (P3) projects to January 1, 2020, [SB 635](#), passed the Senate last week. Under the bill, the P3 may authorize any combination of finance, design, construction, operation, or maintenance for one or more facilities and must be approved by the governor. Eligible facilities include: educational, health, early childcare, or housing facilities; transportation systems, including ports, transit-oriented development, and related infrastructure; and any other type of facility the legislature identifies or proposes for a P3 agreement.

**THE HOUSE APPROVED** a bill this week on accommodations for pregnant employees in the workplace. [HB 6668](#) resembles existing federal law that applies to businesses with 15 or more employees and follows standard human resources best practices. The bill, which passed with bipartisan cooperation, requires employers with three or more employees to provide reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant employees unless it imposes an undue hardship on the employer. Reasonable accommodations may include being allowed to sit while working, frequent breaks, periodic rest, job restructuring, and modified work schedules.

**CONNDOT HAS PREPARED** a draft 2018 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) covering 280 projects over the next four years and is seeking public comment at two informational meetings on Tues., July 11 at the department's headquarters in Newington, according to a [press release](#). Projects include: reconstruction of I-84 in Waterbury; rehabilitation of the Gold Star Bridge in New London; and I-95 improvements from Greenwich to Stamford.

**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT** in Connecticut jumped in April from the previous month, as the CT DOL [posted](#) on its website that there were 2,800 more construction workers in April than there were in March (61,900 vs. 59,100, a 4.7 percent increase). Construction employment on a year-to-year basis has increased by 4.2 percent overall as there were 59,400 construction jobs in April 2016 compared to 61,900 in April 2017. With last month's gain, according to a [listing](#) of all states by AGC of America, Connecticut ranked 1<sup>st</sup> among all 50 states in 1-month construction employment gain or loss, and 20th among all states in a year-to-year comparison.

**THE WHITE HOUSE AND** Congress are headed for a fight over President Trump's desire to build new toll roads on U.S. highways, according to an [article](#) in *The Hill*. The administration is drafting plans to lift current tolling restrictions on interstate highways as part of an effort to upgrade the nation's infrastructure. But the idea will be a tough sell in Congress, where lawmakers have generally been reluctant to broach the unpopular subject.

**THE SENATE IS TAKING** the lead on President Trump's effort to move a massive infrastructure package through Congress, *The Hill* [reports](#). Republican lawmakers in the upper chamber are making plans that could serve as the building blocks for negotiations on the president's initiative. "We are going to work with the White House, but we're not going to wait," Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said at a Transportation Construction Coalition event last week.

**THE OFFICE OF FEDERAL** Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) would be folded into another government agency under the Trump Administration's Department of Labor 2018 fiscal plan, according to a [report](#) in the *Washington Post* this week. Under the Obama Administration, the OFCCP often conducted full-scale audits of companies, examining their practices in multiple locations, rather than carrying out shorter, more limited reviews as previous administrations had done. Some companies have questioned the more aggressive approach, noting the office has consistently found since 2004 that 98 percent of federal contractors comply with the law.

**CONNDOT BID RESULTS** for May 31, 2017: There were no bid results this week.

**A PANEL OF NEW YORK CITY** owners, construction managers, and labor leaders assembled this week to discuss the future of union construction labor, according to a [report](#) in *The Real Deal New York*. Former New York Building Congress president Richard Anderson said building permits are finally up and big-ticket projects are in the pipeline, but the panel agreed that sky-high costs could threaten the prosperity. New York is the most expensive city in the world to build, largely due to high construction wages and rising material costs. Gary LaBarbera, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, said trade unions have been making strides to compensate for lost market share, reworking contracts to be more competitive and finding ways to reduce the hourly aggregate cost of labor.

**THE AIA REPORTED** that the April Architecture Billings Index (ABI) score was 50.9, down from a score of 54.3 in the previous month, according to a [press release](#). This score still reflects an increase in design services (any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings). On a regional basis, the Northeast sector registered an ABI score of 50.7.

**ASSET RECYCLING**, the selling or leasing of infrastructure assets to the private sector and the use of those proceeds to pay for upgrades, maintenance, and new infrastructure, could be a key strategy in the Trump administration's budget to incentivize investment by state and local governments, according to a [report](#) in *Governing*. Top Trump administration officials have been championing the concept which was developed by the Australian government in 2014. That country's 2016 budget

demonstrated that \$5 b. in federal funding incentives had stimulated more than \$20 b. in infrastructure investments through asset recycling.

**THE USE OF BIM FOR** infrastructure projects is on the rise, with 52 percent of horizontal construction companies surveyed reporting that they used the technology on more than half of their projects, according to a SmartMarket report from [Dodge Data & Analytics](#). That figure is a big jump from the mark two years ago, when only 20 percent of infrastructure companies said they used BIM on a majority of projects. The study, which surveyed engineers, contractors and owners in the U.S., U.K., Germany and France, found that 87 percent of respondents saw a positive return on investment from BIM.

**DRUG TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE** will be the topic of an informational breakfast [workshop](#) hosted by the CT DOL's Office of Workforce Competitiveness, in partnership with the CT Employment and Training Commission, on June 15, 2017. The three-hour workshop and discussion will be held from 8 to 11 a.m. at DOL, 200 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield. Seminar fee is \$25 and online registration is available at this [link](#).

**THE CCIA SAFETY ROUNDTABLE** discussion, [New ANSI Standards for Aerial Lifts](#), presented by Tony Groat, International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), is scheduled for Tues., June 13, 2017, at noon at CCIA, 912 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. The Safety Committee will meet immediately following the roundtable.

**CORRECTION:** The Young Contractors Forum Golf Tournament will be held on Thurs., July 27, 2017, not July 17, 2017 as announced in last week's Highlights. To [register](#), please contact [John Wilhelm](#).

**A LIMITED NUMBER OF** foursomes are available on a first-come, first-served basis to interested CCIA members in the upcoming AGC of Connecticut Golf Tournament, Mon., July 17, 2017 at Wethersfield Country Club. A shotgun start begins at 12:00 noon, and evening reception and dinner to follow. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Please see the attached [registration form](#) and contact [John Wilhelm](#) at the CCIA office if you are interested.

**FLIERS INCLUDED IN HIGHLIGHTS**, 6/2/17: 1) [CCIA June Calendar](#); 2) [YCF Joint Summer Meeting](#) 6/15.

**FROM THE INTERNET:** On this day, June 2, 1835, P.T. Barnum launched his first traveling show. The main attraction was Joice Heth who was reputed to be the 161-year old nurse of George Washington. Today is National Doughnut Day. In 2008, Paul Newman, 83, took his GT1-class Chevy Corvette out on the Lyme Rock Park race track for the last time and capably drove it to almost its top limits.