

For Biden, a busy first-week transportation agenda

By Tanya Snyder

01/20/2021 10:55 AM EST

As President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take the oath of office Wednesday afternoon, POLITICO took stock of what to expect in the first days of his presidency. What follows is a list of changes Biden is expected to make imminently on transportation priorities.

Covid relief bill: Biden has proposed a \$1.9 trillion Covid relief bill to supplement the one that was enacted in the final days of 2020. Biden's proposal has \$20 billion more for transit, on top of the \$14 billion the sector got in December. Missing from this plan: additional aid for the private bus industry, which has been decimated by the pandemic and has so far gotten \$2 billion to fill a hole five times that big.

Mask mandate: Biden will launch his “100 Day Masking Challenge” immediately upon taking office, including a requirement for masks and physical distancing on federal lands, in federal buildings and by federal employees. A requirement for a mask mandate on interstate travel is expected Thursday.

Muslim ban reversal: Biden plans to rescind Trump’s ban against travel from mostly Muslim countries Wednesday. Trump signed the ban his first week in office, though it took a year and a half to land on a version that would stand up in court. People from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and North Korea, and political officials from Venezuela, have been mostly barred from entering the country under the ban. People from Nigeria, Eritrea, Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan were barred from applying for visas to immigrate to the United States, and people from Sudan and Tanzania were barred from participating in the Diversity Visa lottery.

Travel restrictions upheld: The Trump administration announced Monday night that it planned to [lift pandemic travel restrictions on non-citizens](#) entering the U.S. from Brazil and much of Europe, effective Jan. 26. Hours later, [the Biden team said](#) that “with the pandemic worsening, and more contagious variants emerging around the world, this is not the time to be lifting restrictions on international travel.”

Buttigieg confirmation hearing: DOT Secretary-designate Pete Buttigieg will appear before the Senate Commerce Committee Thursday where senators will weigh his nomination. Soon-to-be-Majority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#)’s office would not say when a floor vote on Buttigieg’s nomination is expected.

Rules review: The clock is already ticking on the rash of last-minute rules published by the Trump administration, including [one to make it harder for DOT to exercise its authority](#) to police unfair and misleading airline practices. Congress would have to act fast to address that one: The Congressional Review Act gives Congress 60 days to disapprove of a rule, and this rule was finalized 54 days ago.

Buy American: Biden’s team has said that between Jan. 25 and Feb. 1, he will sign an executive action to strengthen Buy American provisions.