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## **PAL December Legislative Update 12/05/19**

### **American Association of Port Authorities**

The American Association of Port Authorities has had a busy few months as they reorganize with a new leader, Chris Connor, taking over the helm from long-time president Kurt Nagle and a few staff changes within. Mr. Connor took a week-long tour of a few Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports in November, visiting Jacksonville, Miami, Pensacola, Mobile and New Orleans.

He also introduced a new team of government affairs staff in Cary Davis, Director of Government Relations and General Counsel, and Evan Chapman, Director of Government Relations. Susan Monteverde is no longer with AAPA.

### **On The Hill**

The federal government is operating on a Continuing Resolution, which holds all funding steady on FY19 levels through December 20 – Congress’ next deadline for a budget deal. Much of the current debate continues to be over President Trump’s push for funding a border wall by reprogramming Department of Defense funds. If a budget deal is not reached, there could be a threat of a government shutdown right before the Christmas break or another CR could be passed to keep government “working” into early 2020.

The CRs are, of course, delaying funding for DOT grant funding for ports and new Corps funding, which is contained in the Energy and Water appropriations bill – not yet passed.

### **Trade**

The U.S. consummated a trade agreement with Japan recently, allowing American agriculture exports a more open market with other tariffs being phased out over next few years.

The USMCA, or NAFTA 2.0, is in final stages of Congressional negotiations. Enforcement provisions are being finalized (namely safe working conditions for Mexican labor, which drew labor into the coalition of support). There is no organized opposition to this bill and most expect it to be passed in the next 2-4 months.

The Trump Administration is also finalizing a phase 1 deal with agriculture import guarantees from China in exchange for a rollback of the September tariffs and a freeze on the proposed tariffs scheduled to go into place in December. This week, China’s Commerce Ministry said the two sides had reached a “consensus” with top U.S. negotiators Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. The announcement came after China’s top policy making body issued guidelines for stronger protection of intellectual property, which has been a top priority for the Trump Administration.

### **Pelican State Politics**

The latest Louisiana gubernatorial race is over and Governor John Bel Edwards earned a second term by about 40,000 votes over Baton Rouge businessman Eddie Rispone. Edwards' second term will be met with a super majority of Republicans in the Senate and a near super majority in the House.

Politicos will have to play the name game for a while as the 72nd legislature will feature 64 true rookies – 18 in the 39-member Senate and 46 in the 105-member House. The new members are the most since term limits first kicked in following the 2007 elections.

The new legislature will also feature a pretty wide-open race for leadership positions. In the House, members have been jockeying for months to hold the big gavel. Members most active in the race so far have been Lance Harris, R-Alexandria; Stuart Bishop, R-Lafayette; Stephen Dwight, R-Lake Charles; Ray Garofalo, R-Chalmette; Barry Ivey, R-Central; Sherman Mack, R-Denham Springs; Tanner Magee, R-Houma; Jack McFarland, R-Jonesboro; Clay Shexnayder, R-Gonzales; and Alan Seabaugh, R-Shreveport. Of course, Speaker Taylor Labas was a last-minute dark horse during the vote four years ago.

In the Senate, the body changed its rules to a secret ballot two years ago thanks to an effort by Sen. Eric LaFleur. Senator's to watch who are positioning themselves for leadership posts are Bret Allain, R-Morgan City; Page Cortez, R-Lafayette; Sharon Hewitt, R-Slidell; Ronnie Johns, R-Lake Charles; and Rick Ward, R-Gross Tete.

The organizational session will convene at 10:00 am on Monday, January 13, 2020, with final adjournment no later than Wednesday, January 15, 2020.

There has been much speculation about Gov. Edwards calling a special session to address infrastructure and economic development prior to the 2020 regular session. However, that remains to be seen. The 2020 regular session convenes at noon on Monday, March 9, 2020 with final adjournment no later than 6 p.m. June 1.

While the 2019 election cycle is over, Louisiana's 2020 campaign season is just getting started. Louisiana's first major municipal race of the new cycle is already underway ahead of the 2020 spring ballot with businessman Friday Ellis challenging Monroe Mayor Jamie Mayo in the April 4 municipal elections. Qualifying is in January.

The spring presidential primary ballot will also host several other races for mayor, a district judgeship, an appellate seat, the Republican State Central Committee and the Democratic State Central Committee and presidential nominees.

The fall election will be top of mind both nationally and throughout Louisiana with President Donald Trump at the top of the ballot against the democrat nominee and U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy running for a second term, along with Louisiana's six-member House delegation. The open primary is scheduled for Nov. 3 with runoffs as needed on Dec. 5.

### **Who will succeed Gov. Edwards?**

The 2019 election results were not yet certified when two statewide republican officials were already talking about the top Louisiana post in 2023. Attorney General Jeff Landry sent a message to supporters expressing his interest and Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser told reporters he was

“absolutely” considering a run. Other Republicans who may have an interest in the 2023 race are Congressman Garret Graves of Baton Rouge, state Sen. Sharon Hewitt of Slidell, U.S. Sen. John Kennedy, Treasurer John Schroder and Agriculture Commissioner Mike Strain.