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Vianini Hosts Rep. Lance at New Jersey Facility



Vianini Pipe Vice President Kevin Brown (left) shows N.J. Assemblywoman Donna Simon (center) and Rep. Leonard Lance (right) how concrete pressure pipe is made.

On Aug. 9, [Vianini Pipe](#) hosted Rep. Leonard Lance (R-N.J.) and Assemblywoman Donna Simon (R-16) at its New Jersey location. ACPPA coordinated the visit.

Rep. Lance, a member of the powerful House Energy & Commerce Committee, and Assemblywoman Simon toured Vianini's facility and heard about the issues facing the industry, particularly inadequate investment in water and surface transportation projects. With workers manufacturing pipe in the background, both lawmakers demonstrated a keen understanding of infrastructure investment's broad economic impact and the need to solve our nation's highway and water financing crisis immediately.

Facility visits are the best way to introduce policymakers to your company, your employees, and your industry. ACPPA is standing by to facilitate these visits. Please contact ACPPA lobbyist [Daniel Fisher](#) to learn more.

Canadian Chamber Senior VP to Headline ACPPA Annual Meeting

ACPPA is pleased to announce that Warren Everson, senior vice president of government relations for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC), will be a featured speaker at the ACPPA Annual Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia on Sept. 20. ACPPA joined the CCC in 2012 to support that organization's advocacy for increased infrastructure investment by Canada's federal and provincial governments.

Everson joined the CCC in September 2010 and heads its public policy activities. He manages a multi-sectoral team of researchers and lobbyists, and coordinates the work of ten policy committees. In 2011 he developed the "Top Ten Barriers to Competitiveness," which has become an important product in the Chamber's policy and advocacy roles.



Warren Everson, senior VP of government relations for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, will brief 2013 ACPPA Annual Meeting attendees about Canadian politics and infrastructure policy.

Everson joined the CCC from StrategyCorp, a government relations consultancy based in Ottawa and Toronto. He was also director of government relations at Bell Canada and served as vice president for policy and strategic planning for the Air Transport Association of Canada.

In addition to his advocacy work, Everson also had a successful decade-long career in government. He served as chief of staff to the Minister of Transport and the Solicitor General, and was on the staffs of five other ministers, including the Minister for International Trade during the negotiation of the Canada/US Free Trade Agreement.

In his remarks on Sept. 20, Everson will discuss a range of subjects including the state of politics in Canada, the status of key tax and infrastructure issues, and how ACPPA and its members can more effectively influence the Canadian policy process.

For more information about the meeting, please contact ACPPA President Rick Lawhun at rlawhun@acppa.org or (703) 273-7227.

WRDA: What's at Stake in Your State?

On Aug. 2, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) announced his committee's version of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is nearly complete and he hopes to have the legislation on the House floor in October.

WRDA authorizes studies and projects within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' key mission areas including navigation, shoreline protection, environmental restoration, and natural disaster damage reduction. It also traditionally includes Army Corp policy reforms. WRDA was last enacted in late 2007.

To help make the case for WRDA among lawmakers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, of which ACPPA is a member, unveiled state-by-state [fact sheets](#) detailing how waterways and ports impact local economies and job creation. The resource also includes links to information about the nation's top deep water ports, inland ports, and inland waterways.

The Senate approved its version of WRDA last May. Consequently, ACPPA and its industry allies have turned our attention to the House to urge lawmakers to move the process forward so that final details of the legislation can be negotiated in a conference committee in the near future. Visit ACPPA-action.org today to press for your congressman's support on this critical water projects legislation.

House and Senate THUD Bills Fail to Make Sound before Recess

As lawmakers entered the final legislative week before the August recess, transportation advocates were optimistic the House and Senate would complete work on Transportation, Housing, & Urban Development (THUD) appropriation bills ([S. 1243](#); [H.R. 2610](#)).

However, in what epitomized the contentious nature of the past eight months, lawmakers left town with both chambers failing to complete work on the bills as interparty squabbles and partisan bickering got in the way of compromise and legislating.

The Senate THUD bill, which contained \$54 billion in funding, largely ignored the spending caps agreed to in the Budget Control Act of 2011 (the sequestration law). While the bill had the bipartisan support of THUD Subcommittee Chairman Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Ranking Member Susan Collins (R-Maine), Senate Majority Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) organized the entire Republican conference on the Senate floor (except Collins) in opposition to the legislation, preventing it from overcoming the 60-vote threshold to bypass a filibuster.

In the House, H.R. 2610 appropriates \$44.1 billion for fiscal year 2015 to the Transportation and Housing & Urban Development Departments, a \$4.4 billion cut to current, post-sequestration levels – the lowest amount in seven years and nearly \$10 billion less than the Senate version. Scoffed at by the Democratic caucus and GOP moderates, House Republican leaders pulled the legislation from the floor on July 30 to save face.

Congress has limited days in session before the end of the fiscal year (Sept. 30), so it likely won't revisit the THUD appropriation bills next month. Instead, lawmakers will focus on the arduous task of completing a continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown.

Alternative Highway Funding Plans Gain Steam at State Level

On Aug. 15, the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) passed a [resolution](#) urging Congress to create a \$20 million initiative to support state-level pilot programs exploring transportation funding alternatives to fuel taxes.

Although the measure is non-binding, state lawmakers have continued to show Congress that the federal government's infrastructure funding mechanism is inadequate and will not support future needs.

NCSL contends that, in addition to the Highway Trust Fund's (HTF) expected insolvency in 2015, gas taxes continue to yield diminishing returns. Indeed, a recent College of William & Mary [study](#) said continuing under the existing system would result in a \$365.5 billion deficit to the HTF by 2035. Meanwhile, a July 23 Congressional Budget Office [report](#) indicated the HTF will be unable to support current highway or transit spending in FY 2015 if it is to remain solvent, jeopardizing more than \$50 billion in annual investment – the "year zero" scenario.

NCSL's resolution, sponsored by an Oregon state lawmaker, passed just days before a vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) opt-in [program](#) is expected to be signed into law by the state's governor. Nevada's Department of Transportation is also studying alternatives to the state's fuel consumption user fees, including implementing a VMT program.

Visit ACPPA-action.org to urge your lawmakers to find new revenue streams to maintain the HTF.

Short-Haul Exemption Clarified in Complex HOS Rules

On Aug. 7, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) clarified the classification of "short-haul" truck drivers. These individuals were carved out from the 30-minute break rule in the recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, [upholding](#) the hours of service (HOS) regulations that took effect on July 1.

FMCSA's guidance [document](#) explains that the short-haul operations exemption will apply to drivers (commercially and non-commercially licensed) who operate within 100 air-miles of their normal work reporting location, as well as non-commercially licensed drivers who operate within a 150 air-mile radius of the location where they report for duty.

The 30-minute break requirement under the HOS provisions dictates that any non-exempt driver must take an off-duty break for at least 30 minutes every eight hours of driving.

Despite the FMCSA's clarification on the short-haul driver exemption, the HOS rules remain complex and cumbersome to navigate. [Click here](#) to view a Q&A page created by ACPPA to help the concrete pressure pipe industry better understand HOS rules and how the new regulations might impact haulers of ACPPA member produced materials.

IRS Mandates Businesses Inform Employees of Health Coverage

On Aug. 30, the Internal Revenue Service published a [rule](#) in the *Federal Register* requiring employers to provide all employees (full and part time) with information regarding their health coverage options by Oct. 1, 2013.

Mandated by the Affordable Care Act, the new rule applies to businesses that fall under the Fair Labor Standards Act regardless of whether the employer offers health insurance to any of its employees. Businesses will be required to notify new hires of coverage options within 14 days of their start date.

The Department of Labor created model notices for employers that [do offer](#) and [do not offer](#) health coverage to employees. Notices must include information about what is provided in the Health Insurance Marketplace, an employee's eligibility for premium tax credits for certain plans, and that purchasing coverage in the Marketplace may mean forfeiting an employer-sponsored health care plan.

Stay tuned to ACPPA for more information about Affordable Care Act rules.

Bill to Rein in Regulators Clears House

On Aug. 2, the House passed legislation requiring regulations with an economic impact of more than \$100 million to undergo review and approval by the House and Senate before taking effect.

The Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act ([H.R. 367](#)) also mandates that if Congress doesn't sign off on a "major" rule in 70 legislative days, it cannot be implemented. According to House Small Business Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-Mo.), major rules published in the past four years have added nearly \$70 billion in new regulatory costs. The bill's supporters hope the REINS Act would thwart major regulatory actions, such as rules born out of the Affordable Care Act and Dodd-Frank.

Facing a veto threat from the White House, the REINS Act will likely encounter the same fate as a [similar bill](#) that passed the House in Dec. 2011, which never made it to the Senate floor. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) has introduced the REINS Act ([S. 15](#)) in the Senate for this legislative session.