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President Trump will reveal his "vision" in the "next several weeks" of an infrastructure package that relies heavily on state, local and private dollars to make good on a promised \$1 trillion in new investments over the coming decade, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said Monday.

Trump's pledge to rebuild the country's roads, bridges and airports was a key campaign promise that has been on the back burner in the early stages of his presidency as he's pursued health-care legislation and outlined a tax-cut package, both of which remain a long way from completion.

Chao said the Republican president's forthcoming infrastructure plan — which she said "will kick off our collaboration with Congress" — will include \$200 billion in direct federal funds. While Democrats broadly share infrastructure investments as a priority, they prefer far more direct federal spending.

"A key feature of the infrastructure plan will be unleashing the billions of dollars in private capital available for investment in infrastructure," Chao said at an event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, adding that states and localities that have already secured funding for projects will be given higher priority for federal funding.

Ed Mortimer, the chamber's executive director of transportation infrastructure, said he expects an outline of "principles" from the administration in coming weeks, with a fuller plan coming later this year.

Trump took a similar approach on his tax plan, releasing a one-page description last month, accompanied by the promise of a fuller proposal later after consultation with Congress.

Chao's remarks Monday echoed previous comments by Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget, about the balance between federal and nonfederal spending, but also offered some new details.

Chao said that the administration would identify and fund directly "a few special projects" that are not likely to draw private investment.

"Candidates for the special category may include projects that have the potential to significantly increase GDP growth or to lift the American spirit," Chao said, without elaborating.

Chao said Trump's plan, which is being developed by a task force that includes 16 federal agencies, will reflect a "broad and inclusive" definition of infrastructure.

"It not only recognizes traditional infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, railroads, inland waterways and ports," she said. "It may also potentially include energy, water, broadband and veterans hospitals as well."

Chao also said the package will include measures intended to "revitalize our country's workforce." She said greater "digital literacy" will be needed to manage the country's future infrastructure, including "fleets of cars that talk to each other, dispatched by workers at a computer."

As Trump and other administration officials have emphasized, Chao also said the package will include steps to streamline regulations with the aim of allowing infrastructure projects to be constructed more quickly.

She said the administration recognizes that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach on infrastructure. For example, she said, toll roads are more appropriate for urban areas than for rural areas where they are less traveled.

Her remarks were delivered at the fifth annual "Infrastructure Week" hosted by the chamber. The goal of new investments is shared both by business and labor leaders, who are often at odds on other policy objectives.

Underscoring the shared goal, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka addressed the gathering in a video, noting how long the discussion stage has been.

“This isn't a field of dreams, and instead of building, we've been discussing and delaying,” Trumka said.

He praised Trump for including the \$1 trillion infrastructure pledge in his speech to a joint session of Congress earlier this year but said the size of the package should probably be even larger.

“Where is the bill? It's go time,” Trumka said.

Mortimer said the chamber remains “optimistic” that a sweeping infrastructure plan will make it through Congress.

Asked whether \$200 billion in direct federal spending is enough, he replied: “We think it's an excellent start. Congress may decide to do more than that as the process goes forward.” – ***The Washington Post***

