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House of Representatives Passes PRO Act

The House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 2474, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, by a largely party-line vote of 224-194. Among other provisions, the legislation would make it easier for workers to unionize, change how employers classify workers, rollback state right-to-work laws and block laws that allow workers to not pay union dues. The legislation is not expected to be taken up in the Senate this year.

Members can find a section-by-section summary of the bill [here](#). For further questions, contact Kevin McKenney at kmckenney@demolitionassociation.com.

House Democrats Unveil \$760 Billion Infrastructure Proposal

Democrats in the House of Representatives have released the [framework](#) of a proposed five-year, \$760 billion plan to upgrade America's infrastructure. The framework outlines a number of major investments including repairs and improvements to surface transportation, rail and transit systems, airports, ports and harbors, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, and broadband. The proposal also includes \$2.7 billion for Brownfield restoration.

The National Demolition Association (NDA) released the following statement regarding the proposal:

"These principles are an important step towards meaningful action on infrastructure legislation. There is wide consensus that our nation's infrastructure needs to be revitalized and Congress should take action to make this a reality. Demolition is a critical component of any comprehensive infrastructure package, and NDA is ready to work with lawmakers to ensure that this kind of work is a focal point of legislation, said NDA Executive Director Jeff Lambert. "In particular, we applaud the House for including over \$2 billion for Brownfield restoration, as this is an important program for the demolition industry, in addition to revitalizing distressed communities. We will work hard with lawmakers and stakeholders to communicate the importance of demolition in any package from Congress and strategies to address our nation's infrastructure challenges."

NDA will be watching closely for legislation on infrastructure and will be weighing in with lawmakers as that process unfolds.

DOL Revises National Emphasis Program to Reduce or Eliminate Worker Exposure to Silica

Recently, the Department of Labor's (DOL) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced a revised [National Emphasis Program \(NEP\)](#) to identify and reduce or eliminate worker exposures to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in general industry, maritime, and construction. The NEP focuses on specific industries expected to have the highest numbers of workers exposed to silica, and looks at enforcement of the new silica standards, one for general industry and maritime and one for construction.

According to the DOL, the following revisions were made to the NEP:

- Revised application to the lower permissible exposure limit for respirable crystalline silica to 50 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) as an 8-hour time-weighted average in [general industry](#), [maritime](#), and [construction](#);
- Updated list of target industries, as listed in the appendix of the NEP; from this list, area offices will develop randomized establishment lists of employers in their local jurisdictions for targeted inspections;
- Compliance safety and health officers will refer to current enforcement guidance for RCS inspection procedures;
- All OSHA regional and area offices must comply with this NEP, but they are not required to develop and implement corresponding regional or local emphasis programs; and
- State Plans must participate because of the nationwide exposures to silica.

OSHA will conduct 90 days of compliance assistance for stakeholders prior to the start of programmed inspections for the NEP.

President Trump Signs USMCA

On January 29, President Trump signed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) during a ceremony at the White House. This agreement would update and replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The House of Representatives approved the USMCA in December and the Senate followed suit earlier this month.

The USMCA was signed in 2018 by President Trump and the leaders of Mexico and Canada, but still had to be approved by the legislatures of the three signing countries. Mexico has already approved the agreement, and Canada's parliament is expected to take action in the next several months. With some additional minor procedural action, the agreement should take effect later this year.