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Dems Want Climate Change, Tax Hikes in Infrastructure Deal.

The top two Democratic leaders on Monday told President Trump that any bipartisan infrastructure package needs to take into consideration climate change and include “substantial, new and real revenue” — a preview of the coming fight over tax hikes.

Trump will host Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) at the White House on Tuesday for discussions on a major infrastructure bill, one of the few policy areas that could see action amid divided government and as the 2020 race heats up.

Democrats want the measure for roads, bridges, waterways and other projects to be paid for with tax increases, and with a final price tag of at least $1 trillion over 10 years. Trump’s fiscal 2020 budget calls for $200 billion in federal spending on infrastructure, which White House officials say will leverage an additional $800 billion in investment through public-private partnerships over the next decade.

“America’s unmet infrastructure needs are massive, and a bipartisan infrastructure package must meet those needs with substantial, new and real revenue,” Pelosi and Schumer wrote in a letter to Trump on Monday. “We look forward to hearing your ideas on how to pay for this package to ensure that it is big and bold enough to meet our country’s needs.”

The leaders laid out other Democratic priorities: Any deal must extend beyond traditional infrastructure projects, take into account climate change, include “Buy America” provisions and provide jobs for a broad swath of workers.

“A big and bold infrastructure package must be comprehensive and include clean energy and resiliency priorities,” Pelosi and Schumer wrote. “To truly be a gamechanger for the American people, we should go beyond transportation and into broadband, water, energy, schools, housing and other initiatives. We must also invest in resiliency and risk mitigation of our current infrastructure to deal with climate change.”

“A big and bold infrastructure plan must have strong Buy America, labor, and women, veteran and minority-owned business protections in any package,” they added. “This bill can and should be a major jobs and ownership boost for the American people – manufacturers, labor contractors, and women, veteran and minority-owned businesses.”

Pelosi told reporters earlier this month that an infrastructure package “has to be at least $1 trillion. I’d like it to be closer to $2 trillion.”

Trump last year reportedly told lawmakers and senior White House officials that he was in favor of a 25-cent gas tax hike to help pay for an infrastructure overhaul. The gas tax, which supports the Highway Trust Fund and pays for road projects, has not been raised in more than two decades.

But on Monday, a source familiar with Schumer’s thinking said the senator would not entertain any

gas-tax proposal unless Trump also rolled back some tax cuts from his 2017 landmark tax law.

“Unless President Trump considers undoing some of the 2017 tax cuts for the wealthy, Schumer won’t even consider a proposal from the president to raise the gas tax, of which the poor and working people would bear the brunt,” the Democratic source said.

Tuesday’s gathering marks the first meeting between Trump and the top Democratic leaders since the report from special counsel Robert Mueller was made public. It comes as multiple Democratic-led committees in the House have launched investigations into Trump, his administration, his business dealings and whether he obstructed justice.

A handful of other House Democrats will be attending Tuesday’s meeting: Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (Md.), Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (S.C.), Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján (N.M.), Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal (Mass.) and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (Ore.).

On the Senate side, Democratic attendees will include Minority Whip Dick Durbin (Ill.), Assistant Democratic Leader Patty Murray (Wash.), Democratic Policy Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (Mich.), and Sens. Ron Wyden (Ore.) and Tom Carper (Del.), the ranking members of the Finance and Environment and Public Works committees, respectively.

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