

## Rebuilding Our Infrastructure: A Common Sense Approach

President Trump has promised to deliver \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure investments. After almost two years, details of the plan remain incomplete, but elements outlined thus far raise serious concerns and the Trump Administration's budget proposals have sought to drastically cut funding for cleaner transportation projects. The need for infrastructure improvements is undeniable, and it is significant. The American Society of Civil Engineers has given U.S. infrastructure a D-plus grade overall and estimates that we need to spend \$3.6 trillion by 2020. It is imperative that any infrastructure package advanced by Congress or the Trump administration address these needs while promoting job creation and protecting taxpayers, our communities, our health, and the environment.

The following principles should be included in any infrastructure package.

1. **A Comprehensive Approach.** Sustained investments should be provided to maintain and address deficiencies in a range of critical infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, flood damage reduction, transportation, energy, and broadband.
2. **Fix It First.** Use taxpayer dollars more efficiently by focusing on repairing our existing systems. We must bring our existing infrastructure to a state of good repair and not allow further deterioration that requires more costly repairs in the future.
3. **Prioritize and Right Size Projects.** Distribute money through competitive bidding and reward projects whose costs and benefits have been analyzed and compared to competing projects, and emphasize operational improvements, tailoring projects to provide the biggest benefit for the lowest cost.
4. **Advance Cleaner Projects.** Infrastructure funding should encourage projects that reduce energy usage and do not increase pollution, such as smart meters, water and energy efficiency measures, and public transit, passenger and freight rail, bicycling, and walking.
5. **Look to the Future.** Technology such as high-quality broadband and wireless should also be funded to provide data that can increase efficiency, enhance the economic competitiveness of rural localities, and promote affordable access for individuals. Infrastructure investments also must support projects that are designed, sited, and built with full consideration of the future impacts of climate change when the potential for drought, flooding, more intense storms, and other impacts is much greater than today.
6. **Ensure Adequate Project Review.** Legal provisions providing transparency, public participation, consideration of impacts of infrastructure projects on natural resources, communities, and health, as well as consideration of alternatives, should not be weakened or circumvented. Delay in pursuing projects is largely due to financial challenges and public opposition rather than to review requirements. Federal infrastructure funding should not come at the expense of reductions in federal funding for new or existing environmental investments or regulatory programs, and infrastructure funding and financing must be contingent on environmental protections being followed when implementing projects.
7. **Enhance Equity.** Funding should address affordability issues in underserved communities by making high caliber infrastructure and services available to all.
8. **Adopt P3 Safeguards.** Public-private partnerships (P3s) can be a meaningful part of any infrastructure package, but experience has shown that there are many potential pitfalls of this approach. To avoid wasting taxpayer dollars, provisions should be adopted to help ensure competitive bidding, require a meaningful contribution of private capital, allow public input and review, prevent excessive profits, and eliminate non-compete clauses.

Additional elements are needed to address particular types of infrastructure:

### Interstate Natural Gas Pipelines

1. **Improve FERC's Environmental Review Process.** Enforce a closing date for utilities to submit all permitting request information before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issues a draft environmental impact statement for comment. The public and local and state governments are unable to comment effectively on FERC's environmental documents because the project and associated information changes even during the comment periods.
2. **Ensure Public Involvement in Assessing Need.** Require evaluation by independent experts of market demand for natural gas, and offer that analysis for public comment, for proposed pipelines. FERC does not engage the public or local or state governments in its evaluation of the public necessity of proposed pipelines, the most basic question facing the Commission.
3. **Encourage Regional Planning.** Funding should address regional infrastructure planning to ensure that landowners and ratepayers are not burdened by unnecessary infrastructure. FERC permits pipelines without consideration of regional needs and existing pipeline capacity.
4. **Give Local and State Governments a Role in Permitting.** These entities are often in a better position to assess the effects of proposed projects than FERC, and funding should ensure that they have the technical capacity to address complex siting issues pipelines present.

### Water

1. **Fully Fund Existing Programs.** Funding should expand or complement the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, not replace them.
2. **Encourage Nature-Based Infrastructure.** funding should encourage natural and nature-based infrastructure solutions for water system needs, including source water protection, floodplain restoration, flood damage reduction, stormwater retention and infiltration by requiring consideration of these options before implementation of conventional methods.
3. **Prioritize Increased Coordination.** Funding should prioritize cross-departmental and multi-jurisdictional coordination and management of water infrastructure.
4. **Encourage Integrated Planning.** Wastewater and stormwater utilities should be encouraged to use integrated planning to achieve prompt compliance with the Clean Water Act and maximize water quality improvements that protect public health and the environment.
5. **Increase Funding Options for Communities in Need.** Grant and/or low interest loan funding should be available to communities with the largest gap between their infrastructure needs and ability to raise or repay funds from local sources.

### Transportation

1. **Increase System Efficiency.** Dedicate significant funds to Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), Transportation System Management (TSM), and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) to improve performance of infrastructure already funded by taxpayers.
2. **Prioritize Safety Improvements.** Reduce fatalities and serious injuries by funding system-wide, multimodal, data-driven planning and projects that improve the safety of the transportation system for motor vehicle and non-motor vehicle users.
3. **Provide More Transportation Choices.** Promote a more balanced transportation system by increasing investment in public transit, passenger and freight rail, bicycling, and walking to give people options. Opinion polls consistently show public preference for more choices, which can also help promote economic development, reduce dependence on foreign oil, improve health, and provide better services for elderly, disabled, and low income citizens.
4. **Offer Complete Street Incentives.** Create a dedicated fund to provide localities funds for technical assistance and project construction to help ensure that streets are planned, designed, operated, and maintained to safely accommodate users of all modes of transportation of all ages and abilities—pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and drivers.