Inside Infrastructure

Constructing the future

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Inside Infrastructure 2022

Constructing the future

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States belong in the driver's seat of infrastructure investment

By U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe

While I am looking forward to enjoying retirement in January of 2023 and spending more time with my beautiful wife and family, there is still much work to be done in the coming months. I've always said there are two things we should be doing here in Congress: authorizing funds to provide for our military and rebuilding and improving on America's infrastructure. I believe that stands true today and will tomorrow.

When I came to Congress in 1987, I pursued committee assignments where I could impact transportation policy because as a conservative, I was driven by my conviction in the Constitution to defend our nation and invest in our nation's infrastructure.

As a senior member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), I understand the vital need to improve our roads, bridges and infrastructure to connect communities, empower economic productivity, and create jobs across America. To that end, I have authored many landmark, bipartisan transportation and water resources laws, including the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Act in 2005, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) in 2012, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) in 2014, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act in 2015 and the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act in 2016.

As we continue to look to the future of infrastructure policy, it is vital to allow states like Oklahoma to stay in the driver's seat to empower economic growth.

My first major highway bill, SAFETEA-LU, provided billions of dollars towards real and needed infrastructure projects across the nation. The law significantly enhanced our nation's transportation system and created jobs for millions of Americans. And just two years later, Congress overrode a Presidential Veto to pass WRDA 2007 to authorize numerous critical water resources projects in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This law re-instated Congress' regular oversight over Army Corps of Engineers projects to ensure water infrastructure needs were addressed in a fiscally responsible manner.

All of these bills were enacted into law because former Sen. Barbara Boxer and I put partisanship aside and focused on providing commonsense solutions to our infrastructure challenges in a reasonable and responsible manner. Unlike all of these bipartisan bills, the Biden administration is intent on massive spending and tax hikes to prioritize a radical climate agenda instead of focusing on what truly matters. Last year's so-called infrastructure package was, unfortunately, a grab-bag of bad policy decisions that focused on liberal wish-list items – like propping up electric vehicles – rather than sound policy that provides concrete investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure.

I urge my colleagues to remember that states are best equipped to decide where to prioritize funding for vital infrastructure projects, not Washington bureaucrats. When far-left idealists decide they know better than each individual state, Oklahomans suffer the consequences. As we continue to look to the future of infrastructure policy, it is vital to allow states like Oklahoma to stay in the driver's seat to empower economic growth.

Though you don't hear about it happening much these days, Republicans are working in a bipartisan way on infrastructure. I am grateful to have a colleague like Sen. Shelley Moore Capito to continue to champion infrastructure investment while working with Democrats. It starts with finding common ground and shared goals that ensure our roads, bridges, airports and waterways work for this country. That's what it's all about: getting results for the American people and leaving our nation's infrastructure in a better condition for our children, their children and all future generations to come. Congress has a legacy of bipartisanship when it comes to infrastructure investment and we can't afford to stop now.

U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe, Oklahoma Republican, serves as Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He is also a member of the Small Business Committee and the Environment & Public Works Committee where he leads the Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee as Ranking Member. Sen. Inhofe is an avid pilot and committed supporter of infrastructure for the U.S. to drive the world's economy.

Domestic production is key to recovery from our national energy crisis

By Colonel Tom Magness (ret.)

Recent federal policies have placed our energy production out of step with domestic demand, and misguided efforts to date have failed to fill the supply gap. Following Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion into Ukraine, the Biden administration halted crude oil deliveries from Russia. Russian oil accounted for three percent of all U.S. petroleum imports in 2021 – a small, but statistically important portion of U.S. crude. While the President may have made the right decision sanctioning Russia, he did not provide an actionable plan to offset the ban on Russian oil, let alone provide solutions that meet the increased demand for an economy recovering from a pandemic. In the process, these moves have illuminated a major national economic risk. With gas prices reaching yet another record high, we need to boost American production to modulate energy prices.

Instead of looking to increase energy production here at home, the administration has turned to other countries. Like Russia, countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Venezuela do not share our geostrategic and geopolitical interests, and now hold increased influence on American fuel costs. We need to be doing all we can to fortify our national energy infrastructure and solve this critical domestic issue right here at home.

Unfortunately, long before the invasion of Ukraine, the administration set policies into motion which indirectly led to the conundrum America is currently facing. President Biden has been antagonistic toward the American energy industry from his first days in office when he instituted a ban on new energy leases on federal lands and offshore and mounted an all-out assault on pipeline infrastructure.

In June 2021, the builders of the Keystone XL pipeline announced their intent to abandon the project after the Biden administration blocked the (previously approved) cross-border permit. Similarly, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is still reviewing the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), despite multiple previous reviews that found the pipeline posed no significant environmental impacts. DAPL follows rigorous safety standards and is one of the safest pipelines ever built. Additionally, the DAPL project created 12,000 jobs for American pipeline workers and has been safely operating since June of 2017, transporting more than 500,000 barrels of crude oil every day.

As a retired Army Corps officer, I am well acquainted with pipeline permitting issues. Redundant, burdensome reviews and processes hampered by partisan politics, jeopardize the pipeline, the livelihoods of the pipeline workers, the ability to make risk-based investment decisions, and our energy security overall. Despite being illogical, these economically harmful policies are likely in service of activists with no viable alternative solutions and whose agenda ultimately impacts the wallets of every American.

DAPL project created 12,000 jobs for American pipeline workers and has been safely operating since June of 2017, transporting more than 500,000 barrels of crude oil every day.

This, in part, is why we are witnessing significant spikes in fuel costs since early 2021. Unfortunately, even after the invasion of Ukraine and an economy finally emerging from the worst of the pandemic, the administration has done little to adjust its policies to meet the demand. Just last week, the Biden administration canceled oil and gas leases in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, which has halted the potential to develop domestic energy on more than one million acres. By slow-walking pipeline permitting, failing to expand energy development along the coastal shelf, and halting oil and gas leasing on federal lands, the administration has caused enduring harm to our energy sector.

Sadly, middle-class America is paying the price for the administration's obstinacy. According to AAA, current prices for regular gasoline and diesel prices have topped $4.56 and $5.57 a gallon respectively, nearly doubled since the President entered office. These are the highest prices ever recorded. Price surges have directly contributed to widespread inflation – increasing costs and reducing availability of food and household goods.

The answer to our country's current energy crisis is right here at home. If the United States does not support a robust energy market domestically, it will always be dependent on foreign oil, with no capacity to surge to meet increasing demands. Focusing on domestic sources deters drastic outcomes and benefits the economy, enabling the U.S. to prosper no matter the foreign circumstance.

Tom Magness (U.S. Army colonel, retired) served as a commander in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He is the founder of the Eagle Leadership Group and acts as a strategic adviser to the Grow America's Infrastructure Now Coalition (GAIN).

grow america's infrastructure now

GAIN Supports Investment in American Infrastructure

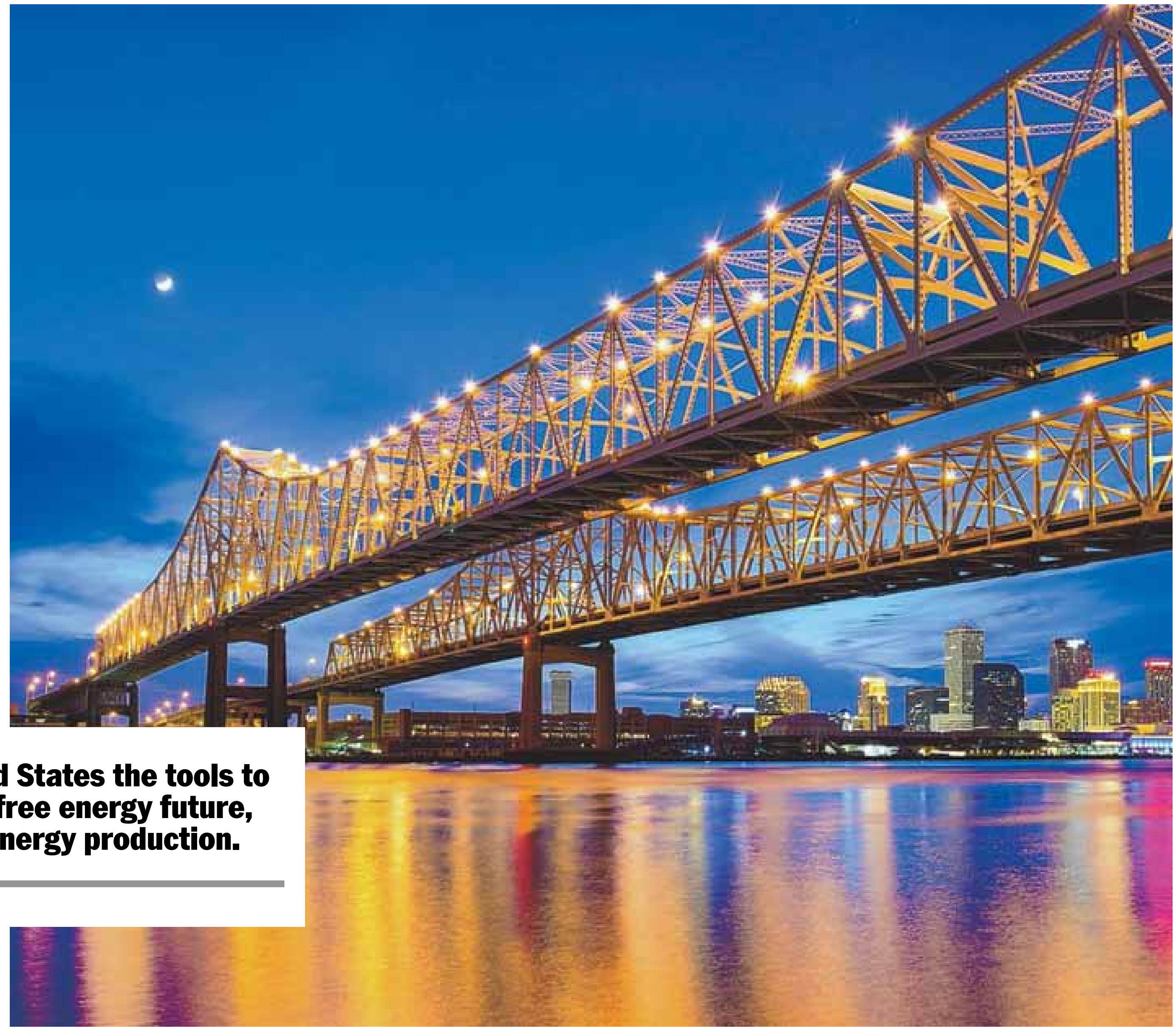
Rebuilding our nation's infrastructure – from our roads and bridges to our pipelines and telecommunications networks – is critically important. Sensible investments in the building blocks of our society result in a range of benefits for local communities across the country: creating jobs, generating tax revenues for funding schools and emergency services, and supporting small businesses. By investing in our nation's infrastructure and streamlining regulations, we can achieve a stronger, more secure, and more prosperous country.

It's time to Grow America's Infrastructure Now.

The GAIN Coalition is a diverse coalition of trade associations, labor groups and businesses that have come together to rally support for infrastructure projects across the country. GAIN represents 21 organizations that collectively have more than 1 million individual members.

www.gainnow.org | @GAINNowAmerica

Bipartisan infrastructure law shows what we accomplish together



By U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy

Last year, Hurricane Ida brought the national conversation surrounding America's decaying infrastructure to Louisiana. Small businesses and growing industries can't rebound if the electricity grid is down and roads are impassable for days, weeks, and months following a natural disaster. Without effective, safe, and secure infrastructure, there is no foundation to rebuild and no opportunity to protect coastal communities.

The IIJA gives the United States the tools to lead, secure a Russia-free energy future, and strengthen U.S. energy production.

We recognized these needs. And acted. After months of negotiations between Republicans and Democrats, representing states from the west coast, east coast, south, and middle of America, we successfully crafted the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). It is the culmination of an effort to make responsible investments that our communities and economy need, instead of a bloated, partisan bill with no consideration on how to pay for it.

States like Louisiana are already reaping the benefits.

The infrastructure bill gave the Army Corps of Engineers $17 billion for coastal restoration, levee construction, and flood mitigation. It includes billions more to improve the resiliency of our electrical grid. It invests $65 billion in broadband, giving priority to underserved communities. It funds the repair and construction of highways and bridges, and invests in airports, ports and waterways. The IIJA also slices away at the red tape that so often slows construction projects.

Earlier this year, the Army Corps of Engineers announced it will allocate over $643 million to Louisiana for 21 coastal, waterway, and flood projects. That includes over $378 million for the Morganza-to-the-Gulf Hurricane Protection System. Funds were also dedicated to the Southwest Coastal Louisiana Hurricane Protection System and to the Atchafalaya Basin. These are critical projects to prevent disaster and flooding, all the while saving billions of dollars in damage and providing a return on investment.

Like every state, Louisiana also received its first installment to repair bridges and infrastructure through the Bridge Formula Program. We received an additional $35 million for airports throughout the state. Money has been dedicated toward broadband expansion, clean drinking water improvements, and the clean-up of Superfund sites. There is no doubt that the IIJA is making concrete improvements to our infrastructure.

The IIJA passage last year represents what lawmakers can do when we work together and address the needs of the American people—and implementation of the law couldn't come at a more important time.

The ongoing geopolitical conflicts highlight the importance of investing in American infrastructure to strengthen U.S. energy independence. Putin's war in Ukraine, inflation, and skyrocketing gas prices are hampering our families, workers, and energy sector. If we want to export oil and gas while meeting environmental standards in Europe and elsewhere, we need this money to modernize the industry.

The IIJA gives the United States the tools to lead, secure a Russia-free energy future, and strengthen U.S. energy production. Not only does the bipartisan infrastructure law make historic investments in roads, bridges, ports, and airports, but also funds energy development, offshore energy storage, and efforts to lower carbon emissions. Our nation is seeking solutions. The Biden administration needs to do more to rebuild America's energy independence but the IIJA provides some of the relief we need.

Prioritizing smart investments leads to a brighter future. After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, the federal government invested in New Orleans' levee system's resiliency. As the levees built following Katrina held and saved communities during Hurricane Ida, so will the investments of the IIJA benefit our communities for years to come.

Dr. Bill Cassidy, Louisiana Republican, is the state's senior United States senator. He was one of the key architects of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. He is a member of the Senate Finance and Energy and Natural Resources Committees.

Rural communities need reliable air service for economic growth and diversification

By U.S. Sen. Cynthia Lummis

Our world is more connected now than ever before. This is due, in no small part, to the increase of accessible air travel. Trips that once took days or weeks now are traversable in a matter of hours. Unfortunately, there are two serious challenges facing commercial air service for rural areas: affordability and reliability. Residents of rural states, especially those in the Mountain West, are often forced to drive long distances to access air travel which has widespread consequences for not just our daily lives, but our rural economies. While this is not a problem unique to my home state of Wyoming, we are experiencing some of the most dramatic cuts. Economic growth and diversification are impossible without access to affordable and reliable air service, and communities all across the West are struggling to keep up.

Collectively, the 415,000 square miles that make up Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota average less than 12 people per square mile. The rural nature of this part of the country is precisely why so many choose to live there, though that also means they travel disproportionate distances to access airports. That distance continues to increase as air service providers continue to cut service to these regional airports.

Air service relies on a spoke-and-wheel model, where rural destinations are connected through larger hubs like Denver or Salt Lake City. However, that model relies on the 'spokes' retaining adequate levels of service. Without it, large swaths of the country become less accessible to the public with flights only going between major urban areas. This is the reality many communities in the Mountain West are facing, and this should be Congress' top priority when it moves to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

There are five factors we need to address to ensure rural communities, especially in the Mountain West, have access to reliable air service:

- Supply of well-trained pilots
- Cost of fuel
- Supply of smaller aircraft
- Consolidation of routes
- Lack of resources available to rural airports

The pilot shortage effects all airports, but the impact disproportionally hurts small communities. When there are only two or three daily flights out of an airport, losing one of those flights due to lack of crew leaves travelers scrambling for alternatives. When there aren't enough pilots to cover current routes, the smallest communities are the first to lose service. This happened earlier this year when SkyWest announced it could no longer serve 29 of its smallest communities.

What can be done to alleviate the pilot shortage? The first and easiest step is to raise the mandatory retirement age from 65 to 68. Additionally, we should make the "1500-hour rule" more flexible so prospective pilots can get the training needed without unnecessary flight hour requirements on jets they will not be operating.

The historic rise in gas prices extends to jet fuel prices. While major hubs can make up for the difference in ticket sales, small airports cannot. I have fought vigorously in the Senate against the energy policies from the Biden administration that have increased gas prices, but President Biden has to realize how much damage this does to our national transportation system in addition to individual consumers.

Aircraft size is also a problem. Most flights going in and out of these communities have small manifests. Currently, the smallest commercial aircraft available is a 50 passenger Embraer jet. Most flights in and out of Wyoming, with the exception of flights out of Jackson Hole, a popular tourist destination, won't reach even half of that capacity. Having smaller, regional jets available would make a huge difference in the long-term viability of our rural airports. Congress should work with airplane manufacturers to get smaller planes serving rural America.

As in any business, the least profitable product is the first one cut. In a moment where airlines are having to cut costs, flights to places like Wyoming are the first to go. State officials in Wyoming have to fight for every flight with state and local subsidies to ensure that people in Wyoming don't lose air service. Through Air Service Enhancement Programs and Capacity Purchase Agreements, Wyoming airports barely make ends meet. Without serious reforms to the federal programs designed to help rural air service, rural communities will lose access to the larger network.

We also need to address the lack of resources available to small airports. When something goes wrong at a large airport – a system is disrupted or a vehicle is disabled – backups are in place to ensure timely arrivals and departures. That's not necessarily true for small rural airports. If something goes wrong, like a failed weather observation system as was the case at the Laramie airport, air traffic is shut down indefinitely. Small airports need to be able to mitigate disruptions and ensure reliable air service.

These problems need to be addressed so that rural airports across the Mountain West have the chance to succeed and rural communities can thrive economically. The upcoming FAA reauthorization is the perfect time to address those issues. I am working with my colleagues to ensure that communities across the Mountain West can compete for businesses looking to set up shop and can thrive economically for years to come.

U.S. Senator Cynthia Lummis, Wyoming Republican, was sworn into the United States Senate on January 3, 2021, becoming the first woman to serve as United States Senator from the great State of Wyoming. Born on a cattle ranch in Laramie County, she has spent her entire career fighting for Wyoming families, communities, businesses, and values. She serves on the Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee; Environment & Public Works Committee; and Banking, Housing, & Urban Development Committee.

Americans' roads, deliveries, jobs, pipelines matter more than woke agenda

By U.S. Rep. Sam Graves

"After 100 days of rescue and renewal, America is ready for takeoff, in my view." This is how President Biden described the state of the union in his first joint address to Congress just over a year ago. A lot can change in a year, and the President's rosy prediction of a "takeoff" turned out to be a failure to launch. The Nation and our economy have been grounded by this administration's inability to effectively address the biggest crises facing our country.

Most noteworthy, the President is under widespread criticism for perpetuating a persistently grim economic outlook, with inflation at a 40-year high, supply chain issues refusing to subside, and employers struggling to fill jobs. And yet many of the President's policies are making these problems worse – not better.

As his poll numbers remain abysmally low, the President continues to reach for any self-proclaimed victories, including the massive Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Despite concerns over the scope, cost, and unconventional process that led to IIJA's passage, it is now the law of the land. Congress must ensure IIJA is implemented as it was written – not in a selective manner that promotes a partisan woke agenda that clearly was not included in the law. Congressional oversight in the coming months and years will require absolute transparency and direct communication from the administration to enable us to do our jobs effectively.

With such economic forces already impacting this funding, we must ensure states can address their specific needs, including building new infrastructure where necessary.

So far, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leadership has had one limited briefing about IIJA implementation, but that's all. No full committee briefings, and no testimony from high-ranking officials.

With other harmful Biden administration actions that add more red tape, regulatory burdens, and costs in building infrastructure, we must prevent any further funding value loss from waste, fraud, or abuse.

Because the fact of the matter is, if the current economic crisis continues, the infrastructure law will not provide anywhere near the punch that was promised.

Record inflation, exacerbated by worker shortages, is significantly eroding the value of the law's $1.2 trillion. Inflation is hitting the transportation and construction industries even harder than the general economy. Gas and diesel prices are currently up 51% and 75% respectively over last year.

An Eno Center for Transportation report recently examined the national highway construction cost index, which is typically higher than the consumer inflation rate. The most recent highway construction cost index update in September 2021 shows that highway construction costs have more than doubled since 2003. The report went on to highlight the danger of continuing inflation completely wiping out IIJA's entire funding increase.

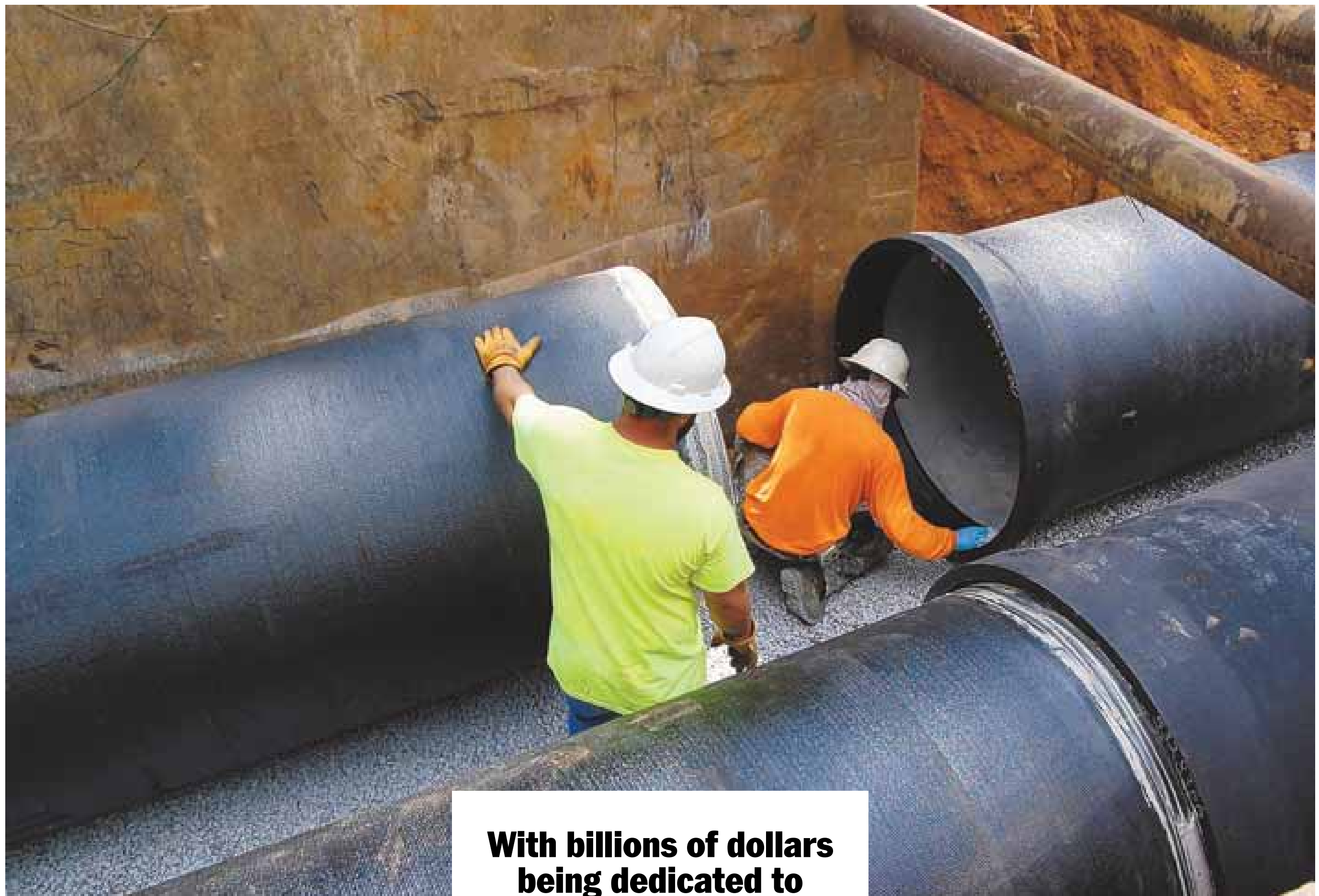
With such economic forces already impacting this funding, we must ensure states can address their specific needs, including building new infrastructure where necessary. Astonishingly, the administration issued guidance to states in December indicating that any new roads should be considered secondary to other investments more in line with the President's green agenda. This guidance is a striking example of the administration seeking to impose policies that are contrary to the law, and it has caused significant confusion among states who are in the process of planning how to use these funds. What's worse, not only was this policy considered and rejected by the Senate negotiators during the development of IIJA, but the administration has also refused a request from Republican members of my Committee to rescind this guidance. In fact, they have since doubled-down on it. The administration must implement the law as it was written, not as it wishes it had been drafted.

Infrastructure is one of the most tangible issues for Americans – from roads connecting people to jobs, to trucks and trains delivering everyday necessities to store shelves, to pipelines safely bringing energy to our homes. It's not just a talking point – infrastructure matters.

If the President refuses to heed the letter of the law and respect the role of Congressional oversight, he will fail to deliver on an issue for which he has been taking a victory lap. That's yet another failure his administration – and our country – can't afford.

U.S. Representative Sam Graves, Missouri Republican, is a small businessman, a sixth-generation family farmer, and a professional pilot. As the lead Republican member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and with over two decades of experience on the Committee, Graves has been instrumental in various laws to improve America's highways, bridges, airports, ports and waterways, flood protection, disaster preparedness, and other infrastructure. His role in transportation is critical as he works on behalf of Missouri's 34,000 highway miles and 10,400 bridges in need of maintenance and repair as well as the 6th Congressional District's two major rivers – the Missouri and the Mississippi.

Federal infrastructure spending in the water sector: a once-in-a-generation opportunity



By Patrick J. Hogan

"Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink."

This old saying is sadly relevant today in too many communities throughout the United States who do not have access to enough safe, clean drinking water.

But in a positive development to tackle this challenge, there has been a tremendous push recently to invest in water infrastructure thanks to the new federal resources as a result of the COVID relief and federal infrastructure legislation. The U.S. EPA is developing new programs and, along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are making significant investments into State Revolving Funds to improve water systems, particularly rural ones.

With billions of dollars being dedicated to water systems, there is a great responsibility to elected officials, utility operators, and others responsible for making pipe decisions to select the best pipe for their communities. The Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association has long advocated for listening to engineers and experts on the ground. In fact, our association is proud to have on staff engineers who work with utilities and others to make sure they understand the application and specifications of Ductile iron pipes. Our engineers also work with researchers at colleges, universities, and elsewhere on projects that can affect buried water and sewer pipes and our understanding of how they can stand up to the challenges they face over decades (or longer).

Ductile iron pipe is the strongest, most resilient pipe to convey drinking water that is currently available. It is the descendant of cast iron, which has been used for more than 100 years – and in some communities for more than 150 years. DIPRA celebrates the strength and longevity of iron pipe with the Century Club, which recognizes more than 580 municipalities and utilities in the U.S. and Canada that have iron pipes in use for more than 100 years, and the Sesquicentennial Club, which recognizes more than 30 municipalities and utilities in the same two countries with iron pipes more than 150 years old.

The technology and innovations from America's Ductile iron manufacturers have resulted in pipes that can withstand seasonal weather pressures – whether it's freezing or roasting temperatures – and also natural events such as wildfires, which are becoming stronger and more severe as we progress with climate change.

Other, and at times lesser, pipe materials frequently rupture under pressure or melting in wildfires, potentially leading to drinking water supplies contaminated with volatile chemicals. At times, the temptation to pay less for costly infrastructure projects with lower quality materials is tempting. But buyer beware. Lower quality pipes and those made of inferior materials will break more easily and not have the life cycle expectations of Ductile, potentially and leading to repairs and replacement that could be more expensive than the initial pipe installation.

When comparisons between Ductile iron and other kinds of pipes are made fairly, including costs incurred over the entire service life, Ductile iron is, by far, the clear winner. Our pipes have a service

With billions of dollars being dedicated to water systems, there is a great responsibility to elected officials, utility operators, and others responsible for making pipe decisions to select the best pipe for their communities.

life upwards of 100 years, while other materials may only last 50 to 60 years. We manufacture pipes to last for generations – to provide clean, safe drinking water for your grandchildren's grandchildren.

Don't just take my word for it, though. Look at what others have recently said about Ductile iron pipes that are being installed in water systems.

The New York City Department of Design and Construction is installing Ductile iron pipe in the Westerleigh neighborhood because it is "more resilient to breakage." The Suffolk County Water Authority, New York state, is installing Ductile iron pipe in Bridgehampton, noting that it is "far more resistant to breaking and expected to last well over 100 years." Connecticut Water is replacing cast iron pipes with Ductile iron with the system's manager of Distribution System Engineering commenting, "It is the latest technology." Similarly, communities and utilities all along the West Coast, from Los Angeles Water to Portland, OR, and Seattle, WA, have included Ductile iron as part of their seismic planning because of its superior resiliency in the face of natural disasters; which is why the East Bay MUD in Oakland, CA, describes the Ductile iron pipes they are installing as the "next generation of pipes" that the utility believes "should last 150 years."

The amount of federal resources being put toward water infrastructure really is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create the kind of water systems our communities deserve. No one should ever question whether their water is safe to drink, bathe in, or use to cook. The first step in designing these systems that will last generations is to use the best pipes – the ones that will last the longest, be the strongest and most resilient, and guarantee clean, safe drinking water. The only pipes that can stand up to that claim are made from Ductile iron.

Patrick J. Hogan is president of the Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association (DIPRA). From its inception more than 100 years ago, DIPRA has provided accurate, reliable, and essential engineering information about cast iron – and now Ductile iron – pipe to a wide variety of utilities and consulting engineers.

Investing in infrastructure makes communities safer, more equitable for generations to come

By U.S. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Advancing infrastructure legislation has been a top priority for me as Chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. After two and a half years of holding hearings and soliciting Member policy and project requests in a bipartisan, public process, I am proud that our INVEST in America Act, which I helped to author, passed the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the House floor, not once but twice. Though I certainly preferred the INVEST in America Act and believe we would have had a stronger product if the House had a say in the final negotiations, my subcommittee's hard work greatly helped to shape the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, providing unprecedented investment in public transportation and new programs to address racial equity and accessibility.

What does the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act mean? It means better roads, bridges, transit systems, rail, cycling and walking infrastructure, water infrastructure, ports, airports and increased broadband in districts across the nation. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act authorized $660 billion for all Department of Transportation programs, including $108 billion for transit investments. That represents a 67% increase for transit over the previous surface transportation bill, and will deliver better rail, bus, paratransit and ferry service across the country. The District of Columbia will see a significant increase in transit investment—after receiving just under $200 million for transit in 2021, we are receiving over $300 million for transit in 2022. Consistent with the Biden-Harris administration's "Justice 40" initiative, more resources provided by this bill will reach communities that have been underserved or harmed by past infrastructure investments.

Safety, equity and reducing carbon pollution are key priorities and principles that guided my subcommittee's work on the INVEST in America Act. There needs to be a concerted effort to combat climate change and carbon pollution from transportation. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act begins the shift that we must make to reduce carbon pollution from transportation and make assets more resilient to the effects of climate change. We made a strong investment in addressing climate change by providing $44 billion for programs to achieve carbon reduction and resilience, including $8.7 billion through a new PROTECT grant program to help states, local communities, tribes and territories mitigate the harm from natural disasters. Furthermore, we secured $7.5 billion in electric vehicle charging investments, plus an additional $5 billion for new low- and zero-emissions electric school buses under a new clean school bus program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency. And here in the District of Columbia, where many of our kids walk, bike and rely on transit to get to school, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act invests $150 million each year in the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to help improve Metro's reliability for our region's travelers.

Consistent with the Biden-Harris administration's "Justice 40" initiative, more resources provided by this bill will reach communities that have been underserved or harmed by past infrastructure investments.

With passage of the fiscal year 2022 omnibus appropriations bill, many of the benefits of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will now be fully unlocked. Transit agencies will receive higher funding and the Federal Transit Administration can begin work on new programs that support the purchase of modern rail cars and low-emission ferry boats and make transit stations more accessible to those with disabilities. State departments of transportation, cities and metropolitan planning organizations can begin to maintain and bring our roads and bridges up to a state of good repair.

Expanding and supporting safe, clean and reliable transportation options have been a hallmark of my career in Congress. During my time as Chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, I have held dozens of hearings on what needs to be done to maintain and modernize our transportation network, and how to move people and goods safely, efficiently and equitably. Most recently, these hearings have looked at the impacts of traffic enforcement on equity and safety, the role of ferries in improving mobility, the impacts of automated vehicles, and ensuring a robust and diverse workforce from our local communities to capitalize on the job opportunities created by these investments in our nation's infrastructure. Next Congress, I hope to serve my colleagues as Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure the historic investments secured in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act are fully delivered to our local communities.

We are at a pivotal moment in our nation's history. Investing in essential infrastructure will make our communities safer, more resilient, more livable and more equitable for our children and for future generations.

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, District of Columbia Democrat, is the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Chair. In addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, she serves on the Committee on Oversight and Reform. She was instrumental in bringing to D.C. the headquarters for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and an additional Metro station at New York Avenue.

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The harmful impact of an overly-burdensome federal water rule

By U.S. Rep. David Rouzer

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Agriculture Committee, I have a keen interest in the federal government's regulation of our Nation's waters – especially when these regulations have the potential to very negatively impact landowners, farm families, municipalities, and small businesses all across our great country.

Besides the impact on American agriculture, a bad rule will also complicate – and in so many cases potentially terminate – new infrastructure projects.

The 1972 amendments to the Clean Water Act established federal jurisdiction over "navigable waters," defined in the Act as the "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS). Complicating the picture significantly, no clear definition of WOTUS was included in the law, which gave wide latitude to creative interpretations leading to much uncertainty and legal wrangling over these many years.

The Obama administration put in place a rule defining WOTUS in such a way that would have resulted in an unprecedented expansion and scope of the federal bureaucracy onto your private property. Their rule's absurd definition, which could have easily been interpreted to include temporary water accumulation, such as a mud puddle and even water running across dry land after a rainstorm, drew substantial opposition from farmers, local governments, small businesses and many citizens.

When President Trump repealed the 2015 Obama-Biden rule, there was no longer any worry about an unelected bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., dictating what could or could not be done on private property. The Trump administration's WOTUS rule provided much needed clarity and predictability to regulated parties across the United States. And despite what some claim, the Trump-era rule did not give polluters free rein to disregard the health of our nation's waterways.

Now, the Biden administration is working to issue a new rule in a move that has many concerned about government overreach with the potential to limit food production, American energy production, home building, and critical infrastructure projects.

Our farm families are the original stewards of our land. They have a vested interest in maintaining and protecting our natural resources. Their livelihoods depend upon clean water and a clean environment. In most cases, those involved in agriculture are multi-generation family farmers. Each intends to leave their land to their children better than they found it. Let us not get in their way with a federal government power grab adding more red tape and headache. Adding more cost to food production in the form of unnecessary regulation is always a dumb idea, but it is especially so during a time of rising inflation, rising input costs, and rising food prices.

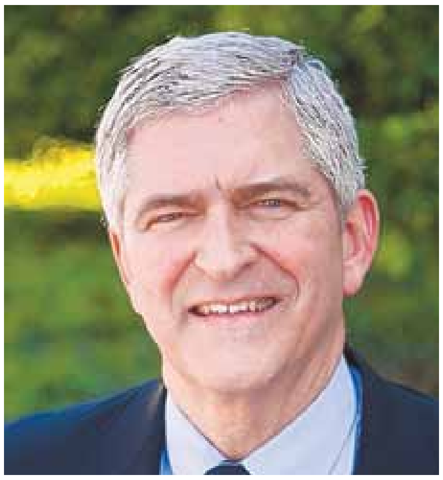
Besides the impact on American agriculture, a bad rule will also complicate — and in so many cases potentially terminate — new infrastructure projects. The ability to start and complete infrastructure projects timely and at the least cost to taxpayers will be severely hindered if not impossible. This is especially concerning given Congress recently approved billions of dollars in federal funding for infrastructure projects.

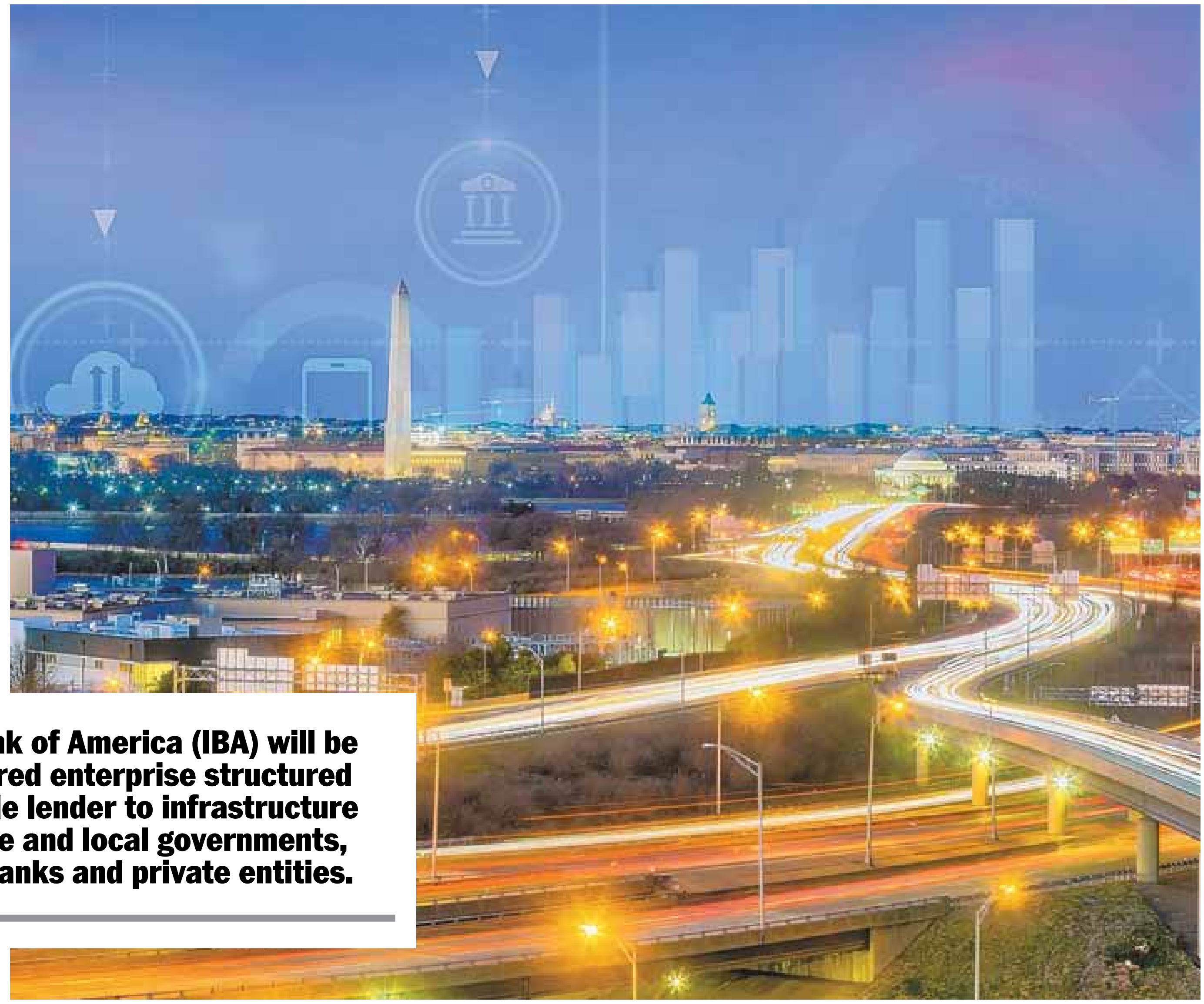
An upcoming Supreme Court ruling on WOTUS in the case of Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency will have significant impacts on any rule the Biden administration puts forward. The administration should halt its current effort to revise the definition until a decision is made by the Supreme Court on Sackett.

In the meantime, they should reinstate the WOTUS rule the Trump administration had in place. It worked. It was fair to our Nation's farmers, ranchers, small businesses, city planners, and everyone else. Importantly, its commonsense clarity enabled better enforcement of the Clean Water Act. A return to anything close to the 2015 Obama-Biden WOTUS rule would place a regulatory burden on average Americans, farm families and small businesses that would be highly detrimental.

U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, North Carolina Republican, represents the state's 7th Congressional District. He serves as Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

A modern solution to our infrastructure needs





By U.S. Rep. Daniel Webster

As a long-time Florida resident, engineer, small-business owner, and legislator, I have witnessed how strong infrastructure helps our families, businesses, and communities thrive and our nation maintain a competitive advantage in a diverse, changing world. Throughout my public service and as a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I have focused on policies and projects that ensure people and goods can move effectively and efficiently across our state.

The Infrastructure Bank of America (IBA) will be a government-sponsored enterprise structured to serve as a wholesale lender to infrastructure projects through state and local governments, state infrastructure banks and private entities.

America's infrastructure is long overdue for critical repairs and much-needed advancements. While federal investment in infrastructure is vital, covering the ongoing and increasing costs of infrastructure with taxpayer dollars alone is not sustainable, nor can it meet our nation's needs. Last year, I introduced a key legislative solution which will facilitate private infrastructure investments. This proposal will complement existing federal programs and encourage states and local governments to pursue all available funding sources, without putting the burden on American taxpayers. The Infrastructure Bank of America (IBA) which will be re-introduced next month will be a government-sponsored enterprise structured to serve as a wholesale lender to infrastructure projects through state and local governments, state infrastructure banks and private entities. All without spending a single taxpayer dollar.

The Bank, structured similarly to the Federal Home Loan Bank System, encourages private investment through tax incentives for those investments during the first three years of IBA operation. This approach differs from prior Infrastructure Bank proposals in that it will be entirely capitalized by private investment. Infrastructure banks have already successfully complemented existing funding programs across the world, including U.S. state infrastructure banks.

IBA investments would not be overly restrictive by project type and can help finance surface transportation projects, ports, electric grid security, broadband connectivity, and the revitalization of Main Street USA. The IBA will set aside a minimum of seven percent of the dollar amount of loans and loan guarantees to rural areas for rural infrastructure projects.

In addition to funding new and existing infrastructure projects, the IBA will also create an estimated 12 million direct jobs and nearly 25 million indirect jobs. Over a 10-year period, the IBA is estimated to increase federal tax revenue by $500 billion. The IBA will also have the authority to issue equity securities and bonds, with an initial goal of raising $1 billion and will be required to maintain a 10:1 debt-to-equity ratio for issuance of bonds of up to $1 trillion.

I am passionate about investing in our country's infrastructure and have worked diligently to improve our transportation systems, while strengthening efficiency and finding innovative solutions that improve how we spend taxpayer dollars.

The IBA is the answer to America's current and future infrastructure needs.

When Republicans held the majority in the House, we worked closely with Democrats on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to pass bipartisan "highway bills" that fund roads and bridges. However, this Congress, Republicans were largely locked out of the development of recent transportation and infrastructure bills. Although there is bipartisan consensus on this issue, the sheer magnitude of needed investment exceeds the budget and borrowing capacity of states and the federal government. The requirement is far beyond what can be funded through the recently enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It is my hope that my Democratic and Republican colleagues will embrace the opportunity to approve the IBA and after passage, encourage their state and local governments to identify priority projects and initiate private capital solutions.

While foreign adversaries like China attract billions of dollars from American investments into infrastructure projects, the IBA will provide incentives for these investments to be made right here in the United States. The IBA renews our commitment to America and accomplishes the revitalization of our nation's infrastructure while rebuilding the economy – all without placing the burden of investment on America's taxpayers. The Infrastructure Bank for America will help rebuild our nation and strengthen our economic competitiveness on the global stage.

U.S. Representative Daniel Webster, Florida Republican, is a family man and small-business owner representing the state's 11th Congressional District. He serves as the Ranking Member of the Economic Development, Public Buildings, Emergency Management Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.