

SECURING **AMERICA'S** FUTURE BY PRIORITIZING **INFRASTRUCTURE**



Securing America's future by prioritizing infrastructure

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Necessity, not nostalgia: Why we need to rebuild the Key Bridge



By Gov. Wes Moore

On the early morning of March 26th, 2024, a shipping vessel the size of the Eiffel Tower and the weight of the Washington Monument collided with the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland. Within seconds, the bridge plummeted into the water below. Six Marylanders died. The vessel ran aground, and pieces of the bridge lay across the ship's bow. The Port of Baltimore – one of the largest ports in the world – was suddenly closed to vessel traffic.

In the weeks and months since the collapse, our administration has moved in partnership with first responders, the U. S. military, and leaders at the local, state, and national levels to address four key directives. We promised to bring comfort and closure to the families, fully reopen the federal channel, support everyone affected by this crisis, and rebuild the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

We have moved with speed and focus to deliver on each of these goals. We recovered the remains of all six Marylanders who were killed in the collapse, reuniting the victims with their loved ones and helping to provide closure to the families of those taken from us far too soon. We refloated and moved the container ship Dali and are on track to fully reopen the Port of Baltimore to vessel traffic. And we passed bipartisan legislation at the state level to assist workers and businesses affected by the collapse.

Now, we must turn our focus toward rebuilding the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Our work to rebuild the bridge isn't born out of nostalgia; it's born out of necessity: you cannot have a fully functioning Port of Baltimore and a fully functioning I-95 corridor if the Key Bridge is missing.

Activities at the Port of Baltimore are deeply tied to the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Nearly 40,000 vehicles traveled over the Key Bridge every weekday before it collapsed. Truckers depended on the bridge to haul cargo from the port out into the rest of the country. Dock workers depended on the bridge to get from where they live to where they work.

freight fell into the “hazmat” category.

The I-95 Corridor is one of the most important commercial assets in the country. Companies who move to the region know they can depend on a reliable, consistent, and predictable supply chain. Now, that certainty is challenged following the collapse of the bridge – and some commuters are starting to slow their travel to and through Balti-

to Baltimore so they could see the wreckage up close. Our team has been in close and consistent contact with the Biden-Harris Administration, who have been true partners every step of the way.

A few weeks ago, I met with Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. He spoke to me about the time he was



Our work to rebuild the bridge isn't born out of nostalgia; it's born out of necessity: you cannot have a fully functioning Port of Baltimore and a fully functioning I-95 corridor if the Key Bridge is missing.

The Key Bridge was more than a Baltimore thoroughfare – it was a national gateway from the North to the South and East to West. Before the collapse, the bridge served as a central link along the I-95 Corridor. If you wanted to move a shipment from Philadelphia to Petersburg, you may have depended on the Key Bridge. If you needed to get your products from Washington to Wilmington, you may have depended on the Key Bridge.

The Key Bridge played a critical role in commerce because of restrictions on the transportation of materials labeled “hazardous” – also known as “hazmat.” Hazmats include everything from fuel to cleaning supplies to batteries. Trucks carrying hazmat aren't allowed in tunnels, so the only way that they can move along the I-95 corridor is over the Key Bridge. In 2020, \$21.5 billion in commercial freight moved across the Francis Scott Key Bridge, and much of the

more because they believe the city is closed. This isn't just a Maryland crisis – it is a national crisis. And the national government has a duty to respond.

Our administration has worked closely with national leaders to move forward on efforts to rebuild the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Maryland's congressional delegation introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation to ensure the federal government pays for 100% of the rebuilding effort. We visited Capitol Hill and welcomed more than two dozen congressional leaders from both sides of the aisle

Oklahoma secretary of state during the Oklahoma City Bombing. He emphasized that there are certain tragedies that transcend state lines.

The collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge is one of those moments, and I am grateful that members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have committed to working together to address this catastrophic situation.

We're making progress – but our team will not rest until we marshal the resources necessary to fully rebuild the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Now is the time for us to buck the trend of political division, join forces, and throw our energy behind this recovery effort. And by standing united, we can, and will, rebuild the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

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Wes Moore is the 63rd governor of Maryland. A Democrat, Moore is Maryland's first Black governor and a veteran Army officer who served in Afghanistan.

Railroads play critical role in supporting the nation's economy and communities



By Joseph R. Hinrichs

Freight railroad companies are the backbone of a thriving American economy.

Over the course of history, America's freight railroads have proved time and time again to be critical to ensuring our nation's economic competitiveness. Sometimes overlooked, freight railroads like CSX provide safe, efficient, economical and environmentally beneficial transportation services that are vital to communities, businesses and industries – and our way of life.

Roughly 28% of the United States' supply chain movement depends on trains, and rail accounts for approximately 40% of the long-distance freight volume – more than any other mode of transportation. Trains also account for nearly one-third of U.S. exports by volume. These numbers tell the story about our industry being dependable, resilient, and indispensable in ensuring all other American industries can compete and thrive in a highly competitive global economy.

But the importance of freight railroads isn't just at a broad, macro level. We know that our ONE CSX team plays an important role in every community we are proud to operate in. For example, following the tragic March 26 Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore that impacted our business due to the Port's closure, we quickly pivoted and opened a new route to move diverted Baltimore imports arriving into the Port of New York and New Jersey. In a time when most affected companies furloughed employees, CSX kept people working in Maryland by moving a lot of our operations into maintenance mode, so we were able to ensure we would be ready to quickly rebound once the Port of Baltimore returned to normal operations.



With more than 195 years of combined industry experience, the team at CSX understands what's needed to build upon our rich history and continue the tradition of safety, innovation, and service.

We know continued investments in infrastructure are what keep rail economical and, more importantly, safe. We operate almost exclusively on the infrastructure we own, build, and maintain for this reason: we want to invest and ensure our infrastructure is safe. In 2023, CSX invested \$1.7 billion of a total \$2.3 billion capital budget in track, bridge, and signal projects. In general, about 40 cents of every dollar earned in the railroad industry goes back into the upkeep of our tracks and railroads, making us one of the most capital-intensive industries in the nation. Even so, the American Society of Civil Engineers gives rail infrastructure the highest grade for our infrastructure conditions compared to all other transportation modes.

The rail industry in general has been investing billions of dollars every year in privately owned freight rail infrastructure. On average, the industry invests \$24 billion in private capital yearly into the industry; and since 1980, our industry has invested over \$780 billion into our networks. These investments result in significant improvements in service for the nation's shippers and considerable benefits to the overall US economy. Over the last 5 years, CSX has invested almost \$10 billion into its infrastructure.

An example of this dedication to infrastructure is our investment into updates for the Howard Street Tunnel

that runs under downtown Baltimore. This is a public-private partnership with Maryland Department of Transportation, the federal government and CSX. With a completion date of 2027, it will modernize freight transportation, increase capacity, and help connect the different markets we serve. Beyond the benefits to freight, it's estimated the construction will generate over 6,550 construction jobs in Maryland, and once finished, will reduce highway congestion and further improve general supply chain efficiency and freight volumes at the Port of Baltimore.

Infrastructure investments and our continued prioritization of technology are directly linked to our improvement in safety stats. We continue to implement innovative technologies to enhance safety and improve the customer experience — and we are also continuing to pursue environmental initiatives that increase fuel efficiency, reduce emissions and help our customers achieve their supply chain sustainability goals.

As an example of our focus on our own environmental commitments, CSX has pledged to reduce GHG emissions by 37.3% before 2030 and has already reduced our emissions intensity by 13% since 2014. As part of our commitment, we're investing in advanced locomotive technologies and innovative operating practices to achieve this goal. For example, the first-ever U.S.-operated hydrogen-powered locomotive was built this year in our locomotive shop in Huntington, WV., using a hydrogen conversion kit to convert a diesel locomotive.

Beyond that, we're also working on

future battery-electric locomotives with the Maryland Department of Transportation, thanks to an \$11.6 million grant Governor Wes Moore helped to facilitate that will bring new battery-electric locomotives and a battery charging station to our CSX Curtis Bay rail terminal. But even while we're looking to the future and investing in new technologies, we are already the most fuel-efficient mode of land-based freight transportation. A CSX train can move one ton of freight over 500 miles on a single gallon of fuel, which is 3-4 times more fuel-efficient than moving one ton of freight by truck.

Rail has powered America's advancement for centuries. At CSX, we are proud of our history dating back to the founding of the original B&O Railroad in Baltimore in 1827. Now modernized, CSX's rail network is an essential part of the nation's supply chain, spanning over 20,000 route miles, connecting to 70 ports, and serving nearly two-thirds of the population east of the Mississippi River in 26 states, the District of Columbia, and two Canadian provinces. We take our vision of being the best-run railroad and our purpose of serving America very seriously, and we are committed to keeping the nation's economy moving.

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Joseph R. Hinrichs has served as the president and chief executive officer of CSX since 2022. A leader with more than 30 years of experience in the global automotive, manufacturing, and energy sectors, he previously served as President of Ford Motor Company's global automotive business.



No one moves like us.



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Transporting tons of goods across the country starts with reliable infrastructure. Dedicated CSX employees work efficiently together to ensure our rails are ready to carry the heaviest loads. Trust the team that prioritizes safety and quality service in every department.

Make your move with CSX!



America needs transmission



By U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer

Roads and bridges are likely among the first things you think of when someone mentions infrastructure. Yet another very important piece of infrastructure runs along highways and cuts through fields, and quite literally powers our country.

Transmission, like every piece of linear infrastructure, facilitates interstate commerce by getting electricity from the point of generation, like a coal-fired power plant or a wind turbine, to consumers. It is an essential component of any electrical grid.

We use more electricity now than ever before, and forecasts indicate the need for generation and transmission capacity is dramatically increasing. Data centers, for one, contribute to the increased demand, especially with the increase of artificial intelligence and cloud storage. This is, of course, without even factoring in

liberals' industrial and electric vehicles-for-all electrification fantasies.

Nobody denies demand is growing, but that might be where the consensus ends. And as with any infrastructure project, need is not the only question. We must also determine which projects get built and who pays for the billion-dollar projects, also known as cost allocation. Admittedly, this gets challenging with integrated utilities and electric cooperatives serving customers in multiple states.

co-opted citizens into paying for green states' renewable energy transmission projects they do not need and will not directly benefit from. That is neither just nor reasonable.

While the law maintains states are well within their rights to make decisions about energy generation, they have no right to force the citizens of other states to pay for their policy choices. If Minnesota, New York, and California want renewables only, the citizens of

carveouts and exemptions to expedite the process for industries they prefer, namely renewable generation and transmission lines. This lopsided approach tilts the scales for favored projects while slapping red tape on everyone else.

Here is what we know: transmission is necessary but expensive, someone will have to pay for it, and the permitting process is broken. Somehow liberals in Washington looked at this set of facts and concluded the solution was to tip the scales in favor of unreliable, costly renewables, while making ratepayers in states who do not want or need them foot the bill. While transmission policy is complicated, it is not rocket science to know a growing economy needs a 24/7 grid, not one that hiccups with shifting winds and a setting sun. Political bias and unaccountable bureaucrats should not build the grid. The end result will inevitably be a classic Washington blunder: costly, centralized, and full of special interests.

Transmission and generation go hand in hand and are essential to a stable grid and dynamic American economy. This is a job for engineers and accountable state regulators. We should empower them to build a grid that actually works and does not cost a fortune.

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Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., is the ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure. He also serves on the Senate Armed Services, Veterans' Affairs, and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committees. His prior service includes time on the North Dakota Public Service Commission and in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Renewable advocates have proposed transmission-specific reforms, but Congress should be focused on making the process easier for all linear infrastructure.

Tradition and law dictate that the most equitable solution is one in which the user pays. When a Minnesota utility built a coal plant in North Dakota, Minnesotans paid for the plant and the transmission line to bring the power to them. That is just and reasonable. Now, Minnesota has passed a renewables-only mandate and expects consumers in every state in its region to help supply and pay for it.

To help facilitate costly public policies like Minnesota's, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recently finalized a new regulation dictating how future transmission efforts are planned and funded. It expanded and mandated the scope of "benefits" to consider when approving new projects. This stacked the deck in favor of renewables by requiring other factors, such as climate considerations, to be included instead of evaluating projects on reliability and economics.

As a result of this new rule, FERC has

those states should pay for it, not the citizens of North Dakota, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Once the question of which projects and who pays has been answered, permitting begins. Like any infrastructure project, too many permits are required, and they can take a decade, or more, with a plethora of hoops to jump through.

It's well known that federal bureaucracy is an unnecessarily high hurdle and needs to be pared back. Renewable advocates have proposed transmission-specific reforms, but Congress should be focused on making the process easier for all linear infrastructure.

When Congress passed the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) last June, we authorized National Environmental Policy Act streamlining, but implementation has been a vast departure from congressional intent. New regulations from the White House make the bureaucratic hurdle even higher, while adding

The Biden administration is choosing radical environmentalists over American infrastructure

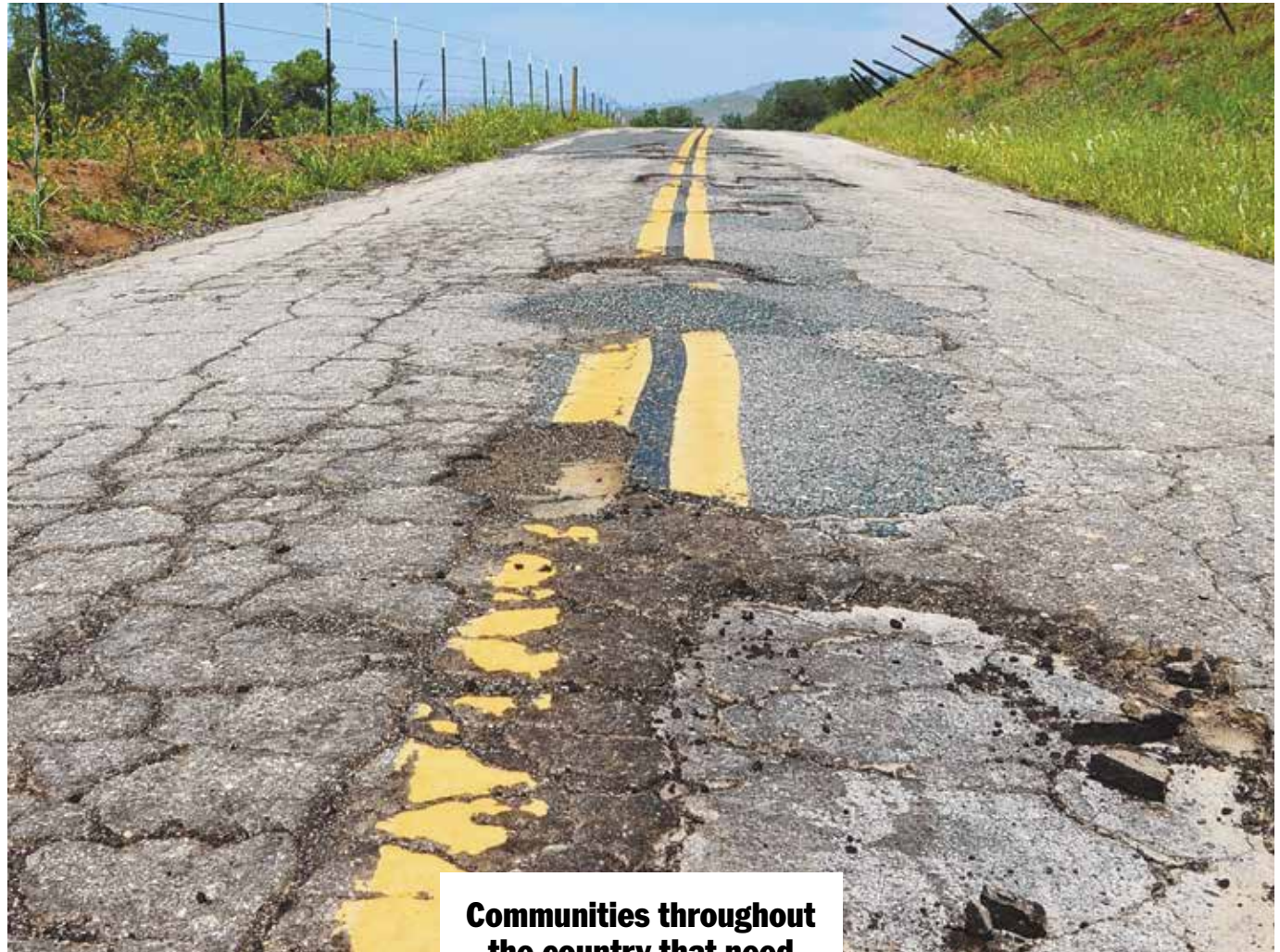


By U.S. Sen. Cynthia Lummis

On his first day in office, President Biden made quick work of handing down an unprecedented number of executive orders to undo years of the Trump administration's careful efforts to protect the American West. In its infancy, this administration exponentially increased red tape and limited U.S. energy, manufacturing and critical infrastructure projects to our nation's detriment. This administration has continued to weaponize even the most mundane tools to stall progress in this country with no regard for the direct and broader consequences.

In an effort to cater to Green New Deal climate activists, this administration has created an unworkable permitting and environmental review process that has dealt a near-fatal blow to domestic energy production, especially out West. While American-based companies can spend decades navigating the bureaucratic process, this administration is readily striking deals with foreign adversaries to meet our energy needs, jeopardizing our national security and sending thousands of Americans to the unemployment lines. Moreover, the Biden administration has used its power to leverage environmental laws and regulations to pander to radical environmentalists, tying up infrastructure projects around the country. States should not have to sue the federal government after delaying projects for years while seeking approval, yet that has become the new norm under President Biden, and NEPA has become the most litigated environmental law in the name of climate change virtue signaling.

Delays due to extreme regulations unfortunately do not just pertain to energy projects. Communities throughout the country that need essential



Communities throughout the country that need essential infrastructure improvements face years-long environmental reviews before they can break ground on many projects.

infrastructure improvements also face years-long environmental reviews before they can break ground on many projects. In the fall of 2021, after spending nearly \$2 trillion in his first year in office, President Biden rolled out a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package that dedicated less than 10% of its funds to supporting actual infrastructure, allocating the lion's share to environmental pet projects. This unprecedented move would become the foundation of this administration's infrastructure policies. It also laid the groundwork for climate change activists to stifle or shut down infrastructure projects essential to our energy independence and national security while rolling out unrealistic environmental mandates that threaten our electricity grid.

Desperate to appease his radical base, President Biden has weaponized the Bureau of Land Management, the Environmental Protection Agency and nearly every agency in between to lock up federal lands and restrict domestic energy production. A recent change to the definition of conservation now allows this administration to restrict energy production, grazing and tourism

from occurring on the federal lands that make up nearly half of the state of Wyoming, and the Biden EPA's finalized Clean Power Plan 2.0 has issued a slew of regulations designed to shutter gas and coal-fired power plants across the U.S. -- despite the fact that they produce nearly 60% of the nation's electricity.

Despite gas and coal-fired plants' substantial contributions to America's infrastructure, this administration has opted to roll out ridiculous electric vehicle mandates that erode consumer choice and are estimated to increase demand on our electricity grid by an alarming 30%. Thus, this administration has intentionally increased demand on a segment of our infrastructure it has spent much of the last three years dismantling. What could go wrong?

Instead of addressing roads and bridges across the country in need of

repair or improving our oppressive permitting process, this administration has proven it is willing to sacrifice key portions of American infrastructure to cater to radical environmentalists. If this administration will not acknowledge the error of its ways and reverse its harmful policies, my colleagues and I will fight fire with fire to reassert the American people's authority and block this administration from further harming American infrastructure. We should be unleashing American energy producers, allowing the American people to enjoy our beautiful landscapes, and encouraging landowners to be partners in species recovery instead of painting them as the enemy. Together, we can right the ship and ensure America can achieve its energy independence and bolster the economy instead of shackling it to appease out-of-touch climate lobbyists.

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Sen. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyoming, is the junior senator from Wyoming and the chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works, Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, and Commerce, Science and Transportation committees.



Why investments in the National Airspace System matter



By Rebecca Spicer

Every day, U.S. airlines transport 2.6 million people and 61,000 tons of cargo across the globe.

It's only possible because of an intricate system supported by more than 800,000 workers.

From airports and runways on the ground, to shipping centers receiving cargo, to our National Airspace System (NAS) that allows airlines to safely fly across the world – this critical infrastructure is relied upon by all.

But it's in need of significant investments to support growth, stability and – most importantly – safety.

The newly enacted Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization law will help achieve that goal by making crucial investments in our NAS that will upgrade its aging infrastructure, outdated equipment and

underperforming technology.

Ultimately, the billions of dollars made available to the FAA in this bill will help ensure the United States remains the gold standard for aviation safety – something we never take for granted and work to improve every single day.

For years A4A has been sounding the alarm on the issue of air traffic control staffing. Currently, the FAA is

Air traffic controllers are working with outdated technology some newer trainees may have never encountered before working in a tower, including floppy disks. (If you don't even know what a floppy disk is, don't worry – let's just say it goes in the same archive file as VHS machines and tape recorders.)

Authorizing the growth of the FAA's F&E budget will finally set the agency up for the modern era of flight and take

transport of powered wheelchairs and mobility aids.

Passengers are the core of air travel and they all deserve to have a positive travel experience. This law will help ensure airlines continue to achieve that goal.

Passenger airlines will have improved definitions of “controllable” and “uncontrollable” delays, allowing carriers to better address their specific challenges and create a more seamless flight experience for travelers.

Finally, the law provides greater protections for our workforce by increasing civil penalties for unruly passengers who threaten the safety of travelers and crew members.

We greatly appreciate the bipartisan group of lawmakers — and countless congressional staffers — who worked tirelessly for months to pass the legislation. We're particularly grateful for the leadership of House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Sam Graves, R-Missouri, and Ranking Member Rick Larson, D-Wash., as well as Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Ranking Member Ted Cruz, R-Texas, for working collaboratively to push this legislation across the finish line.

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Rebecca Spicer is Senior Vice President of Communications at Airlines for America (A4A), which promotes safety, security and a healthy U.S. airline industry. A4A works collaboratively with airlines, labor, Congress, the Administration and other groups to improve aviation for the traveling and shipping public.

“Ultimately, the billions of dollars made available to the FAA in [the reauthorization bill] will help ensure the United States remains the gold standard for aviation safety - something we never take for granted and work to improve every single day.”

short 3,000 air traffic controllers. ATC is a crucial part of air travel – ensuring planes safely take off and land at airports and cruise in the sky.

But the agency's system of hiring and training is fundamentally broken. This law works to mitigate that issue by forcing the FAA to revise its current staffing model for ATC and hiring the maximum number of controllers.

Our nation's air traffic control towers are understaffed and overworked. We owe it to them to ensure they have enough people on the job with the best training to ensure our nation's airports and skies are safe and efficient.

This bill authorizes an increase in the agency's Facilities and Equipment (F&E) budget, providing more cash to update aging technology and physical infrastructure in our NAS.

advantage of current technologies to improve operations across the NAS.

The reauthorization also addresses the FAA's underperforming and over-budget Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) programs by auditing the initiative and prioritizing components that will lead to the most system-wide operational benefits.

These “behind-the-scenes” investments will affect all travelers. Air travel has never been more popular for Americans, and as U.S. airlines get ready for a record-breaking summer travel season, these investments will enhance the flying public's travel experience.

The law will improve accessibility to air travelers with disabilities by increasing training for airline workers. It will also require a review of current airline policies to ensure the safe

U.S. Airlines Commend the Passage of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization

A4A applauds the crucial investments made in our national airspace infrastructure so that we can continue to operate the safest airspace in the world.



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American Airlines

ATLAS AIR
WORLDWIDE

DELTA

FedEx
Express

HAWAIIAN
AIRLINES

jetBlue

Southwest

UNITED

ups

Emerging technology is playing a vital role in infrastructure



By U.S. Sen. John Boozman

During an annual inspection of the Interstate 40 bridge connecting Arkansas and Tennessee in May 2021, a crack in a support beam was discovered. As a result, the bridge had to be closed, disrupting commerce and transportation along this critical corridor. Vehicles were rerouted and barge traffic along this section of the Mississippi River was halted.

New and emerging technology is playing a vital role in helping avoid infrastructure closures and improving the design and construction process for critical projects.

Following detection of the I-40 flawed beam, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) embraced the use of advanced technology to identify the scope of the problem and formulate immediate solutions. A critical tool that proved beneficial in assessing the damage and detecting areas for repair came in the form of drones.

ARDOT has expanded its drone capabilities to improve bridge safety around the state and now has one of the most extensive programs in the country. That successful adoption should serve as an example for other states because we know integrating these devices saves both time and money.

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), it costs \$4,600 for a manual infrastructure inspection. But the same evaluation with a drone is only \$1,200 – a 74% savings.

Hands-on bridge inspections also take a considerable amount of time, but a drone can accomplish the same task in about one hour.

This technology has already demonstrated the ability to trim costs and more effectively deploy resources.

Across the country, we can build on the progress Arkansas is experiencing. Investing in and applying drone capabilities to maintain our infrastructure will minimize interruptions to roadway traffic and ensure goods continue moving across the country.

This is why I championed the Drone Infrastructure Inspection Grant Act. This bipartisan legislation authorizes

infrastructure. The idea of working smarter, not harder, is leading to the implementation of advanced digital construction management systems (ADCMS).

These field-tested digital technologies improve efficiency in the design, manufacturing and operations phases of infrastructure projects. Nationwide, we are experiencing an increased use

and locations. In turn, they gain earlier, more detailed insights about progress to intervene more effectively and maintain productivity on time and within the budget.

Incorporating proven technologies into the scope of future infrastructure investments across the United States offers us a rare opportunity to modernize this complex ecosystem and ensure



competitive grants through the U.S. Department of Transportation to support community investments in American-made drones and will help develop the workforce to operate this technology.

The bipartisan initiative was included in the FAA Reauthorization Act that Congress overwhelmingly approved in May.

It will open doors to infrastructure improvements for state and local entities. I look forward to seeing how this investment will enhance the safety of bridges, roads, railways, and other critical structures.

Innovation is driving cost-effective updates to better support the immediate and long-term needs of our

ADCMS in our surface and water infrastructure project delivery processes. Like the use of drones for infrastructure inspections, this technology elevates timing, cost savings and safety factors that lead to better outcomes and more resilient products.

Construction and project management technologies are used by governments around the globe. This has fundamentally changed how world-class infrastructure is built and managed. By leveraging advanced technology, project sponsors can balance decision-making during project delivery, enabling real-time data capture directly from job sites while improving collaboration across organizations, work streams

we can close the competitive infrastructure gap with foreign competitors.

We're always looking for new approaches that advance safety and efficiency on the corridors that connect our communities and facilitate commerce. Implementing technology that has already proven successful is key to helping achieve this goal. By embracing these 21st century tools, we can move better, faster, and smarter.

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Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., is the ranking member on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. He is the state's senior senator, and serves on the Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Veterans' Affairs Committees.



America moves: Fixing the Highway Trust Fund



By U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford

“I see an America where a mighty network of highways spreads across our country.” – President Dwight Eisenhower, Oct. 1, 1956, Speech in Lexington, Kentucky.

Eisenhower foresaw how critical the efficient movement of people and goods across America would be for our economic growth, and he was right. As the second-highest ranking Republican on the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, and the representative from Arkansas’ First District, which includes Interstates 40, 55 and 555, as well as future Interstates 57 and 69, I see the wisdom of Eisenhower’s vision, and I want to ensure that vision expands for our collective future. That means focusing now on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill.

After being completely shut out of the drafting process for the last surface transportation bill – the Infrastructure

Most of us know that the [Highway Trust Fund’s] fuel taxes haven’t been updated since 1993. No business would be open today if it charged the same prices it did in 1993. We’re in need of more sustainable and rational revenue sources.

Investment and Jobs Act, or IIJA – I know my colleagues on the T&I Committee are anxious to fix the problems we’ve seen with it. IIJA was an enormous investment, but it ignored the biggest challenge we face, and that’s how to pay for transportation investments.

I go back to Eisenhower.

“A sound Federal highway program, I believe, can and should stand on its own feet, with highway users providing the total dollars necessary for improvement and new construction.” – President Dwight Eisenhower, Feb. 22, 1955, Special Message to Congress Regarding National Highway Program.

Again, Eisenhower was right. We must rely on a user-pays system to ensure our nation’s highway programs are well funded in a predictable and sustainable manner. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which is largely financed through an 18.4 cent per gallon gasoline tax and a 24.4 cent per gallon diesel fuel tax, along with other excise taxes on truck tires and sales, is the main funding mechanism for our nation’s federal highway projects. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that in 2024, HTF revenue will be \$47 billion, but federal highway expenditures will total \$65 billion. That’s an \$18 billion deficit.

Between fiscal years 2027 and 2031, the HTF revenue gap will average \$40

billion annually. To fill the shortfall, which began in 2008, Congress began transferring money from the U.S. Treasury’s general fund. Since then, over \$275 billion has been transferred. IIJA continued that irresponsible path to the tune of \$118 billion.

Most of us know that the HTF’s fuel taxes haven’t been updated since 1993. No business would be open today if it charged the same prices it did in 1993. We’re in need of more sustainable and rational revenue sources.

Diesel and gasoline taxes, excise taxes, and interest payments comprise the revenue mix for the HTF. Transit pays nothing into the HTF, but it takes roughly 13% of fund’s deposits. Alternative fuel vehicles also pay nothing into the HTF, but they use the roads every day. In fact, they’re about 30% heavier than comparable gas-powered vehicles, and their heavier weight causes greater road damage. They take more than they give to the national highway system.

To fulfill Eisenhower’s charge that users pay for the highways, we must develop a new financing model incorporating user fees, a pay-as-you-go structure so that Americans aren’t saddled with enormous bills all at one time, and a safeguard against the government double- or triple-taxing Americans for using the same road mile. Finally, we should right-size our spending so we’re prioritizing essential federal projects

with the greatest cost-benefit ratio and allowing our states to tackle projects with smaller, regional impacts.

This won’t be easy. We’re going to have to strike the right balance between fuel and excise taxes, vehicle miles-traveled fees, inflation adjustments, new sources of revenue, and more. But the T&I Committee is up to the task. We’re going to work with the Ways and Means Committee to make sure we have the financing balance right. We’re going to work across the aisle because transportation success is something we all want. I’m committed to finding the bipartisan solutions we need.

The National Bureau of Economic Research found in 2019 that, for about 75% of all existing highway segments in the country, adding just 10 additional lane miles would generate an economic benefit of \$10-\$20 million per segment. For some very high-traffic areas in the New York metro area, that benefit was above \$500 million. Clearly, highways are economic growth drivers. It’s going to take a collective effort and hard choices, but just as Eisenhower said 68 years ago, I see an America where a mighty network of highways spreads across our country.

Rep. Rick Crawford, R-Ark, represents Arkansas’ 1st District. Since coming to Congress in 2011, he has voiced the concerns of his district while bringing solutions to the national table. Crawford is the second most senior Republican on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and currently serves as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. In his role as subcommittee chairman, he has led hearings and worked on legislation to address supply chain deficiencies and trucking policy.

Secure the Highway Trust Fund to keep America moving



By Audrey Copeland

When it comes to infrastructure investment, Americans can usually count on Congress to come together. We don't have to look far for recent examples of bipartisanship.

The response to the tragic Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in March was swift, with the channel reopening to maritime commerce in less than two months.

Just last week, Congress overwhelmingly passed, and the President signed, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization package.

And we are now past the halfway point of the largest modern federal investment package, the \$1.3 trillion Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, benefiting our nation's surface transportation network.

Despite differences, Congress can still get important things done.

Still, there's one data point that is well known yet rarely acted upon – the financial solvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Absent any user-fee solutions, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office predicts the HTF will face a financial gap of \$250 billion by the end of the next decade. Stated simply, money put into the HTF won't keep up with money going out. This is a looming fiscal cliff that we can't afford to ignore any longer.

Congress has a duty to facilitate and support interstate commerce. It is one of the bedrocks of the Constitution, specifically the third clause of Article I, Section 8, usually cited as the commerce clause. But, in the past 25 years, we have missed the opportunity to create a long-term and sustainable solution to our exponentially growing infrastructure needs. Let me explain.



As the piggy bank responsible for all our nation's federally supported surface transportation projects, the HTF has teetered on financial insolvency for years. Its intent is to utilize user fees to financially support itself, ensuring the HTF can remain independently operable by deriving funding from those directly benefiting from the investments it provides.

The HTF's primary revenue source has been the Federal fuel tax (commonly referred to as the gas tax), which is efficiently collected from gasoline and diesel consumption. However, the Federal fuel tax hasn't been raised since 1993. Meanwhile, infrastructure needs are expanding and revenues declining as fuel-efficient and electric vehicles grow in popularity. This issue is compounded when you consider inflationary impacts on materials, labor, and equipment, along with the costs of implementing more complex projects. The HTF is ill-equipped to self-fund, and instead has become dependent on general fund transfers from the Treasury, which in turn has spurred avoidable spending fights in Congress.

If we maintain current spending under IIJA without any new user fee generation, the HTF will be insolvent by 2028. Let me reiterate: if no action is taken, the HTF will be in a financial hole in excess of \$250 billion by the end of the next decade. That is a big number and a gap we all want to avoid.

While increasing the Federal fuel tax would be the simplest means to

dramatically improve the HTF, it likely won't happen, as "raising a tax" is a politically toxic position for either party to champion. More importantly, due to improved drivetrains and EVs, the Federal fuel tax will never be the only solution. That is why we need to shift gears (pun intended) on new user fee models that ensure the HTF can grow to fully support the evolution of our surface transportation network.

Vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) is one promising solution that received Congressional support in 2015's Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Data and pilot programs stemming from that investment illustrate how VMTs could work proportionally to the distance and frequency of various highway users. Moreover, IIJA included a \$50 million provision to allow the DOT to further study the VMT model on a national scale, building upon work done in states like Colorado, Minnesota, and Oregon, to name a few. VMT isn't a new idea; it's been pragmatically studied for years.

Through IIJA's VMT provision, the DOT would convene an advisory council, including input from stakeholders such as state and local governments, frequent highway users (like the trucking industry), and vehicle manufacturers to report suggestions and feasibility of a national program. Unfortunately, the DOT has been slow to establish this council, only issuing requests for participants at the end of 2023, meaning the chances are unlikely of sufficient

data and reports being ready prior to IIJA's expiration. NAPA, along with more than 20 national trade organizations and infrastructure sector partners, [sent a joint letter](#) to the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee urging the DOT to move expeditiously, and encouraging Congress to follow the process and outcomes closely.

We do not, however, think VMT is the holy grail. We should explore various solutions, or some combination, to close the HTF gap. Other promising solutions include user fee models that focus on gross vehicle registrations at the state level, project-specific public-private partnerships, and capturing the EV market. The latter is imperative, because EV users do not pay into the HTF, despite their vehicles carrying heavy batteries that inflict more wear and tear on roads faster than other vehicles.

Further, a policy that was overlooked in 1993, and unaddressed in IIJA, was indexing the Federal fuel tax for inflation to ensure user fees could keep up with current dollars without continued political fracas. We can't afford a similar mistake that allows a rapidly expanding vehicle market to grow without paying into the HTF. We need to ensure all roadway users are captured and everyone pays their fair share to establish a financially independent HTF. NAPA looks forward to working on this critical issue with the House Ways & Means Committee and Chairman Jason Smith, R-Missouri, who recognizes the need to capture all users on our roadways. We thank committee members for their leadership in tackling this vital funding gap.

Americans cannot afford to underinvest in the roads and highways they rely on every day for connection and commerce. The time to act is now. The 119th Congress may tackle a tax package alongside the next highway reauthorization package. Unlike other industries arguing for their respective tax break or extender, the infrastructure community will be coming to Congress with revenue-generating options – a nice break from the norm, and a chance to avoid the HTF's financial cliff.

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Audrey Copeland, PhD, PE, is President & CEO of the National Asphalt Pavement Association, which represents U.S. asphalt pavement producers, paving contractors, equipment manufacturers and distributors, suppliers, researchers, engineers, and consultants to advance asphalt pavements as an essential part of sustainable transportation infrastructure that paves the way for thriving communities and commerce.



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Bipartisan FAA bill is a win for the American people



By U.S. Rep. Sam Graves

There's an old saying among pilots: "If you build a mile of highway, it'll take you a mile, but if you build a mile of runway, it can take you anywhere."

That promise — the promise of something more — inspired me to earn my pilot's license. It's what propelled me from a farm in Missouri to the halls of Congress. And it's why I know that no matter how daunting the odds, there's always a path to take flight.

We just proved that this week. With all the partisanship and division in Washington, getting something done seems next to impossible. Yet, as chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I was able to bring Republicans and Democrats together to put a bill on the President's desk that will reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), rebuild our airport infrastructure, and ensure that America continues to set the gold standard in aviation safety.

To be clear, this wasn't something that I did alone. It was an all-hands-on-deck effort. Far too many legislative efforts these days start with a my-way-or-the-highway type of approach: "Here's my bill — take it or leave it."

We charted a different path.

We started by asking other members of Congress, "What do you want to see in an FAA bill?" We took those suggestions to heart, listened to Americans who work throughout the aviation industry — from pilots and mechanics to manufacturers and customers — and built those real-life experiences into the bill.

We came out with a bill that wasn't just good for Republicans or Democrats, but good for Americans. It made significant consumer protection reforms to ensure Americans get what



Far too many legislative efforts these days start with a my-way-or-the-highway type of approach: "Here's my bill — take it or leave it." We charted a different path.

they pay for when they buy a plane ticket. It included historic investments in our airports, large and small. It also included a title dedicated to general aviation. General aviation has been an essential part of American aviation since the Wright Brothers, but believe it or not, no FAA bill has ever had a general aviation title before.

That's how we went through regular order and passed a bill with 387 votes in the House and 88 votes in the Senate. That's one heck of an accomplishment on a bill that is this important. And we aren't done yet.

This week, we also passed a bipartisan reauthorization of the Coast Guard through the House with 376 votes: legislation critical for defending America's waters and supporting navigation. We're also working on legislation to reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline safety programs. That's an agency most people have never heard of. Still, it plays a crucial role in ensuring

this country's 3.4 million miles of pipelines get oil and gas where it needs to go safely and affordably.

We can walk and chew gum at the same time, though. Right now, we're in the process of putting together another bipartisan Water Resources Development Act, which governs nearly all the civil works missions of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. That's incredibly important for the people of my North Missouri district, bordered by the muddy Missouri and mighty Mississippi rivers.

But you don't have to have experienced a flood, seen a lock and dam firsthand, or lived near a port for this legislation to impact your life. Our navigation system, supported by the

Army Corps, transports nearly two billion tons of cargo every single year. If you shop at a grocery store, you depend on many things that have moved on an inland waterway or through a port. This bill promises to be another win for the American people that can gain broad support in Congress. I remain committed to seeing that through.

With the FAA bill signed into law, we will build and rebuild a lot more than just a mile of runway. We will show that we can and will get the people's work done, and we can do it all without breaking the bank.

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Rep. Sam Graves, R-MO., serves as the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Graves, a professional pilot, recently oversaw the House approval of legislation, now signed into law, to fund the Federal Aviation Administration and the nation's aviation safety and infrastructure programs for five years. Rep. Graves is also a member of the House Armed Services Committee.



Ductile iron pipes: A life partner for clean, safe drinking water



By David Cole

All too often, Americans of all political stripes are quick to criticize the decisions made by the federal government or to raise concerns over whether Washington, D.C. understands the issues that really matter to them and their daily lives. Less often, we see appreciation for policies and decisions that can truly have a positive impact in the lives of our fellow citizens, not just in the short term, but potentially for generations to come.

So please allow me a brief moment to do just that – namely, to applaud the historic investments the federal government is making in drinking water infrastructure that will help our communities make critically needed improvements so

that everyone has access to clean, safe water. Aging water infrastructure has been a well-known problem for years, and we should applaud the recent federal efforts to invest in a solution.

Billions of dollars are being invested in water infrastructure, and these funds must be spent wisely. Prioritizing resilience will help elected officials, utility operators and others responsible for managing these projects ensure that these investments stand the test of time. There are obviously many factors that play a role in ensuring the projects will ultimately be a success. But when it comes to drinking water investment, success can only be ensured when those carrying out the projects are able to select the best pipe material for their communities.

The Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association (DIPRA), which I am proud to now serve as the president, has long advocated for listening to and trusting the judgment of the engineers and experts on the ground. In fact, our association is proud to have 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 other institutions on initiatives that study environmental effects on buried water and sewer pipes and how they can stand up to the challenges they face over their expected service life of at least a century.

It is important to really trust and understand the materials we are using in infrastructure projects. Recently,

questions have been raised about some plastic materials and whether new regulations should be imposed to ensure the public remains safe from any ill effects from their production or use. Plastic pipes have many known risks: they are fragile, with a high risk of failure and a short service life, and they cost more over the life-cycle of a project. There are also many unknown risks and other costs, and research and investigations will continue on these fronts. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is undertaking a review of five chemicals used to manufacture various plastics to determine if any of the chemicals should be subject to further regulation under provisions of the federal Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA). This process is likely to take several years, and if the EPA were to determine that any of these chemicals pose an “unreasonable risk to human health or the environment,” that could trigger additional regulations and limits on the use of these plastics, including in water pipes. In the meantime, however, it is important that water professionals have access to the most up-to-date information available so they can properly assess the risks and future costs associated with plastic pipes.

That is a big reason why DIPRA, and our member-companies, are upfront with our research and technical expertise and want to make sure that both utility companies and the public understand the history and future of our products.

Ductile iron is the modern iron pipe. Iron is a proven material that has been used safely in communities across the country for centuries. In water systems that have installed modern ductile iron mains, water users can turn on their faucets, safe in the knowledge that the drinking water mains are manufactured to rigorous standards for safety and quality. Our pipes are safe, sustainable, and resilient – designed to last for more than 100 years. Imagine the peace of mind that comes with knowing your grandchildren will be drinking clean, safe water because today’s water professionals and community leaders made the smart investment in ductile iron.

We are now seeing the early stages of historic federal investment in drinking water infrastructure. Thanks to the hard work of federal, state, and local leaders, we are excited to see community water systems make upgrades that will last for generations. Manufactured to the highest standards, ductile iron is a water system’s partner-for-life in ensuring the delivery of clean, safe drinking water.

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David Cole is president of the Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association. In that role, he is also the primary representative of DIPRA in coalitions and interest groups advocating for infrastructure resiliency, sustainability, and public health and the environment. Prior to joining DIPRA, David served as senior vice president of Government Affairs for the Business Council of Alabama.

Putting America on the road to success



By U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer

In advocating for his Interstate Highway System in 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower told Congress that “the uniting forces of our communication and transportation systems are dynamic elements in the very name we bear – United States.

Improvements to railways and ports will strengthen our supply chains against disruptions like the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have driven recent inflation.

Without them, we would be a mere alliance of many separate parts.” He recognized that the prosperity of the American economy and the American people is built upon American infrastructure.

Much has changed in the past 69 years. Over 200 million more cars travel our streets today. Many drivers now charge a battery rather than fill a tank. Most Americans rely on high-speed internet to communicate with their families, friends, and coworkers. The connection between the strength of our infrastructure and the strength of our economy, however, remains the same.

As House majority leader last Congress, I was proud to bring the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to the floor and help lead Democrats in passing it. The law represents the largest investment in our nation’s infrastructure since Eisenhower’s Interstate Highway System. Whether by repairing our roads and bridges, upgrading our airports and harbors, replacing dangerous lead pipes, or expanding high-speed internet broadband in rural communities, the BIL will be a cornerstone in the foundation of America’s economic success in the twenty-first century.

Our work did not end when President Joe Biden signed that historic legislation



An aerial view of Dwight D. Eisenhower Highway near Germantown, Maryland.

NICOLE GLASS PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK

into law in 2021. The implementation of the BIL continues every day as we break ground on new projects across America.

House Democrats’ new Regional Leadership Council (RLC), which I am proud to chair, is at the forefront of that effort. With twelve members representing each of America’s twelve regions, the RLC is coordinating with the Biden-Harris Administration and local stakeholders to ensure that these investments reach communities in every corner of the country.

We have made tremendous progress in that mission just two-and-a-half years into the “Infrastructure Decade” that this law launched. We have already announced funding for over 56,000 projects in more than 4,500 communities across the country – from the new Frederick Douglass Tunnel here in Maryland to the expansion of the Port of Nome in Alaska. Repairs are underway on over 165,000

miles of roads and 9,400 bridges. More than 300 airports have received Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grants to expand terminals. The Biden-Harris Administration has also announced funding to replace 1.7 million toxic lead service lines, which carry drinking water from municipal water mains to homes, schools, businesses, and other properties throughout America. These are just a few of the ways this law is improving American lives.

You know a policy is successful when even its fiercest detractors try to take credit for its results. From [new bridges](#) to [waterway improvements](#), state-of-the-art [electric busses](#) to [highway repairs](#), many of my colleagues across the aisle tout local projects funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that they voted against.

Many Republicans who opposed the BIL [celebrated](#) how it expanded rural high-speed broadband access. That

includes the Affordable Connectivity Program, which helped connect 23 million households to affordable high-speed internet. By refusing to work with Democrats to extend funding for the ACP after it expired a few weeks ago, however, these same Republicans have caused millions of Americans to either lose their internet access or see their broadband costs go up.

I understand why my Republican colleagues want to claim credit for these projects – as futile as that effort may be. Republicans have realized that Americans are pleased with how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the rest of Democrats’ Investing in America agenda help workers, families, and communities get ahead.

Better roads, bridges, tunnels, and public transportation will lead to shorter, safer, and cheaper commutes for families.

Critical investments in infrastructure resilience will help combat the climate crisis and protect our communities against stronger wildfires, storms, and floods.

Improvements to railways and ports will strengthen our supply chains against disruptions like the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have driven recent inflation.

The BIL will give our businesses, manufacturers, and farmers the competitive advantage they need to thrive in the 21st-century global economy.

This law is also building new roads to the middle class by kickstarting a historic wave of construction that will generate hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs. Initiatives like the Thriving Communities Program will ensure these investments reach disadvantaged and under-resourced communities nationwide.

And, as Eisenhower observed, revitalizing our infrastructure will ensure that America remains interconnected – a nation united not only by asphalt, steel, and telecom cables, but by the promise of opportunity for all.

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Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., has faithfully represented Maryland’s 5th District for forty-three years. He has also served in House Democratic leadership as caucus vice chair, caucus chair, minority whip, and majority leader. In the 117th Congress alone, as House majority leader, he brought the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act to the House Floor and helped ensure their enactment. Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries appointed Congressman Hoyer to serve as Chair of the Regional Leadership Council in January 2023 to help lead House Democrats’ effort to implement the historic Investing in America agenda.

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Making progress for our nation's infrastructure industry



By U.S. Rep. Troy E. Nehls

I am honored to serve as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials in the 118th Congress.

Thus far, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has passed a reauthorization for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), a bill to reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) pipeline programs for the next four years, and a bill to reauthorize our nation's Coast Guard. The committee is also well on its way to working through the next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

My subcommittee spent the first part of this Congress working on the

Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety Act (PIPES) Act of 2023. This bill passed out of the committee in an overwhelming bipartisan manner and will benefit the country and the great state of Texas. PHMSA is responsible for developing and implementing the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials that are essential to the daily lives of Americans.

The bill reauthorizes PHMSA's pipeline safety programs for the next four years and streamlines the regulatory framework for energy transportation in our infrastructure. Through previous reauthorizations, Congress has mandated several rulemakings that PHMSA has failed to promulgate in the requisite time frame, which includes essential rulemakings for the oil and gas industry, such as the leak detection and repair rule.

Failing to honor these congressional mandates creates uncertainty for businesses that are forced to play guesswork on how to operate. The Biden administration has a duty to help businesses understand the rules they are operating under so they can mitigate costs and comply with the law. The PIPES Act of 2023 addresses this lack of accountability and requires government bureaucrats to publish a status update on completing outstanding congressional mandates every 30 days.

The bill also paves the way for the adoption of carbon capture and hydrogen infrastructure, which will be

crucial to the future of the oil and gas industry. These innovative technologies will pave the way for the future of these industries for the next 50 years. I also secured language in the bill that will reduce pipeline excavation damage incidents and added criminal penalties for bad actors who intentionally damage pipeline operations or related construction. These are all significant reforms that will ensure the miles of pipelines in America safely transport the energy we all use for our modern way of life.

In tandem, my subcommittee has also held hearings regarding oversight of Amtrak and rail safety. I have been working in a bipartisan manner with fellow committee members to address the root causes of the East Palestine, Ohio derailment in Feb. 2023 and I have also visited sites around the country with my Democratic counterparts to hear directly from the good men and women who work in our nation's rail industry.

Whenever a major incident occurs, it is essential that policymakers understand the ripple effects of any legislation that they may attempt to pass. I am pleased with our rail network's overall safety record and stakeholders' continuing efforts to deploy state-of-the-art technology and policies that reduce safety incidents. Contrary to what the media may report, railroad accidents and injuries are down 27% from 2000-2023, collisions are down 62%, and hazmat incidents are down

75%. These are simple facts that illustrate great strides in rail safety.

In January, my subcommittee held a hearing on grade crossings and railroad safety. The subcommittee heard from industry experts and left me convinced that one of the most important things governments can do to reduce the number of deaths in railroading is to facilitate the elimination of as many grade crossings as possible. Grade crossings are where our rail and highway systems meet and, subsequently, where most deaths occur. I believe separating these systems would save thousands of lives and incur many other benefits.

For this reason, I have said on record that I strongly support increasing federal monies for the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program. While I am a strong fiscal conservative and have the voting record to back it up, I believe closing as many crossings as possible will not only save lives but also reduce congestion in our rail network, benefiting both freight and passengers.

I look forward to the opportunity to introduce some of the legislation I have been working on after the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) final report is released.

Rep. Troy E. Nehls, R-Texas, represents the 22nd Congressional District of Texas. He serves as the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

Critical infrastructure includes defense and food as well as energy



By U.S. Rep. Don Bacon

Recently, I hosted a forum on Securing America's Energy Infrastructure in Omaha, Neb., where I was joined by U.S. Sen. Pete Ricketts, R-Neb.; retired Supervisory

Increasingly sophisticated and prevalent cybersecurity and physical threats against the U.S. energy infrastructure are a call to action. Ensuring the security of energy infrastructure is crucial to U.S. energy reliability and resiliency.

FBI Agent and Cybersecurity expert Miguel Clarke; Cybersecurity, and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Region 7 Director Phil Kirk; and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)'s Office of Energy Infrastructure Security (OEIS) Director Joseph McClelland.

Energy and cybersecurity stakeholders from the 2nd Congressional District attended including Omaha Public Power District (OPPD), Tenaska, Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD), the Nebraska Public Service Commission, and the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). Over 70 attendees packed the room.

The speakers discussed emerging threats on energy infrastructure and how energy stakeholders can best prepare for these threats. They discussed preventative measures companies can take as well as how to respond once a threat emerges.

Energy is the critical infrastructure sector that enables other critical infrastructure sectors to operate, making it an attractive target to malicious actors. Increasingly sophisticated and prevalent

cybersecurity and physical threats against the U.S. energy infrastructure are a call to action. Ensuring the security of energy infrastructure is crucial to U.S. energy reliability and resiliency. This meeting provided a forum to discuss how federal agencies are partnering with the public and private sectors to identify and mitigate risk, establish lines of communication, and develop resiliency policies and programs.

It wasn't too long ago that the Colo-

into contracts or cooperative agreements with external providers of electric energy to improve the resilience of defense critical electric infrastructure or reduce such vulnerability.

Military readiness includes energy security, which is also vital to our economy. This issue has long been a critical issue for me, and this legislation will improve the resiliency of our critical defense electrical infrastructure. With growing threats from the Chinese

including one in Nebraska.

A close partnership between the federal government and the private sector is vital to countering cyberattacks from other countries that threaten our national security, economy, and way of life.

In May 2022, AGCO Corp, an agricultural equipment maker experienced a ransomware attack that affected operations at some of its production facilities. Tractor sales had been stalled



onial Pipeline was hacked with ransomware. Within a week, gas stations in the southeastern United States were empty and prices had skyrocketed. This is happening more frequently, and every company needs to harden their cyber operations and have an attack response plan.

Critical infrastructure isn't limited to what we immediately think of, such as electric grids, water supply systems and roads. We should also look at protecting critical defense facilities and food production.

I'm an original co-sponsor for H.R. 1389, the GRID Act, along with Reps. Jason Crow, D-Colo., and Scott Peters, D-Calif. This bipartisan legislation gives the Department of Energy (DOE) the authority to address the vulnerability of critical defense facilities to electric energy supply disruptions due to cyberattacks, terrorism or severe weather. Specifically, DOE may enter

Communist Party and Russia, we need to make energy security a top priority.

In 2022, my bill, H.R. 5658, the DHS Roles and Responsibilities in Cyber Space Act, passed the House after favorable consideration by the Homeland Security Committee. This bill is aimed at helping protect private industry against cyberattacks from other nations such as Russia and China. We gave the Department of Homeland Security the responsibility for protecting our infrastructure and private industry. There was too much ambiguity on who was responsible, and we made the authorities clear. The bill passed with a vote of 313 to 105.

In summer 2021, JBS Foods, the world's largest meat processor, fell victim to foreign cyber criminals, demonstrating the gaps and vulnerabilities American companies face in combating ransomware attacks. JBS Foods was forced to suspend operations in nine locations on account of the cyberattacks,

during the crucial planting season. The ransomware attack came as U.S. agricultural equipment makers were already facing persistent supply chain disruptions and labor strikes that left them unable to meet demand.

We must continue to find ways to further protect our critical infrastructure as threats grow from China, Russia, and Iran. Not only do we need to protect our electrical grids, water supply systems, broadband and other traditional infrastructure, we need to protect our food production and critical defense systems.

Rep. Don Bacon, R-Neb., represents the 2nd Congressional District of Nebraska and serves on the House Agriculture (HAC) and Armed Services Committees (HASC). He is also the chairman of the HASC Subcommittee on Cyber, Information Technologies, and Innovation (CITI) and Quality of Life Panel.

Addressing rural transportation challenges in coastal Virginia



By U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman

Virginia's 1st District encompasses some of the most unique transportation challenges in the country. From congested highways to strained commuter rail systems and deteriorating roads and bridges to sediment-filled waterways, our infrastructure faces significant hurdles. This is particularly evident in Virginia's Northern Neck and the Middle Peninsula, where residents depend heavily on a robust network of roads, bridges, rivers, and channels for transportation integral to our local economies. As someone who commutes daily from Montross to Washington when Congress is in session, and frequently drives across the district to meet with constituents, I witness these challenges firsthand.

Addressing rural transportation infrastructure is crucial for U.S. national security and economic competitiveness on the world stage. In Virginia's 1st District, which includes many rural areas, our infrastructure demands special attention. As the representative for the 1st District, I see my role as a vital link in communicating local infrastructure needs to state and federal authorities.

By advocating for grant applications, seeking authorizing language through legislation such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act or Water Resources Development Act, supporting surface transportation legislation, and preemptively connecting local stakeholders with state and federal officials, we can secure the necessary funding for projects specifically designed to meet the needs of our rural communities.

My background in local government — as a former town council member and mayor of Montross, former chairman of the Westmoreland Board of Supervisors,



The federal government's role is not to dictate specific construction projects, but to empower states and localities so they can prioritize their infrastructure projects.

and former delegate in the Virginia General Assembly — has given me a deep understanding that transportation issues are best addressed through collaborative efforts between local, state, and federal governments. A one-size-fits-all mandate from the federal level is not the solution. Instead, we need a tailored approach that considers the unique needs of each community.

Whether it is drawing attention to a much-needed project or advocating for funding, it is essential to foster cooperation between the federal, state, and local governments to streamline progress on rural transportation projects. Such initiatives are vital for projects like the Robert O. Norris Bridge, which connects Lancaster County and Middlesex County across the Rappahannock River. In its seventh decade of operation, the Norris Bridge has faced significant wear and tear from the elements and increasing traffic. Replacing this bridge is not just a matter of facilitating regional commerce, but also ensuring the safety of motorists. I have long highlighted concerns about the bridge's safety through roundtables with county and state officials and urged U.S.

Department of Transportation officials to support its replacement.

Now, the bridge is funded through the Commonwealth Transportation Board. A survey and site assessment has already been completed, and a geotechnical review is currently being conducted. Next, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will conduct a National Environmental Policy Act review before acquisition can proceed. I'm proud of the significant progress we've made and pleased to see the outlook improving.

This collaborative approach also includes leveraging the federal government to ensure our local communities have the resources to plan and revitalize waterfronts, which are essential to our seafood industry, watermen, and local businesses. That is why I am a strong supporter of the Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act, which provides grants to coastal states to help preserve and expand access for water-dependent businesses.

The federal government's role is not to dictate specific construction projects, but to empower states and localities so they can prioritize their

infrastructure projects. I am committed to advocating for initiatives that emphasize innovation, leverage public-private partnerships, and ensure the safety of motorists and mariners across our region.

Investing in rural transportation infrastructure is not just about building roads, bridges, and maintaining waterways; it's about connecting communities, enhancing safety, and fostering economic growth. By working together — across local, state, and federal governments — we can address the unique transportation challenges of Virginia's 1st District and create a more connected and prosperous future for all residents.

.....
Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., serves as vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and as a senior member of the House Natural Resources Committee. Prior to his election in Congress, he spent 26 years working for the Virginia Department of Health's Division of Shellfish Sanitation and as an environmental health specialist for local health departments in Virginia's Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions.

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Our mission: Rein in inflationary spending while rebuilding America's infrastructure



By U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann

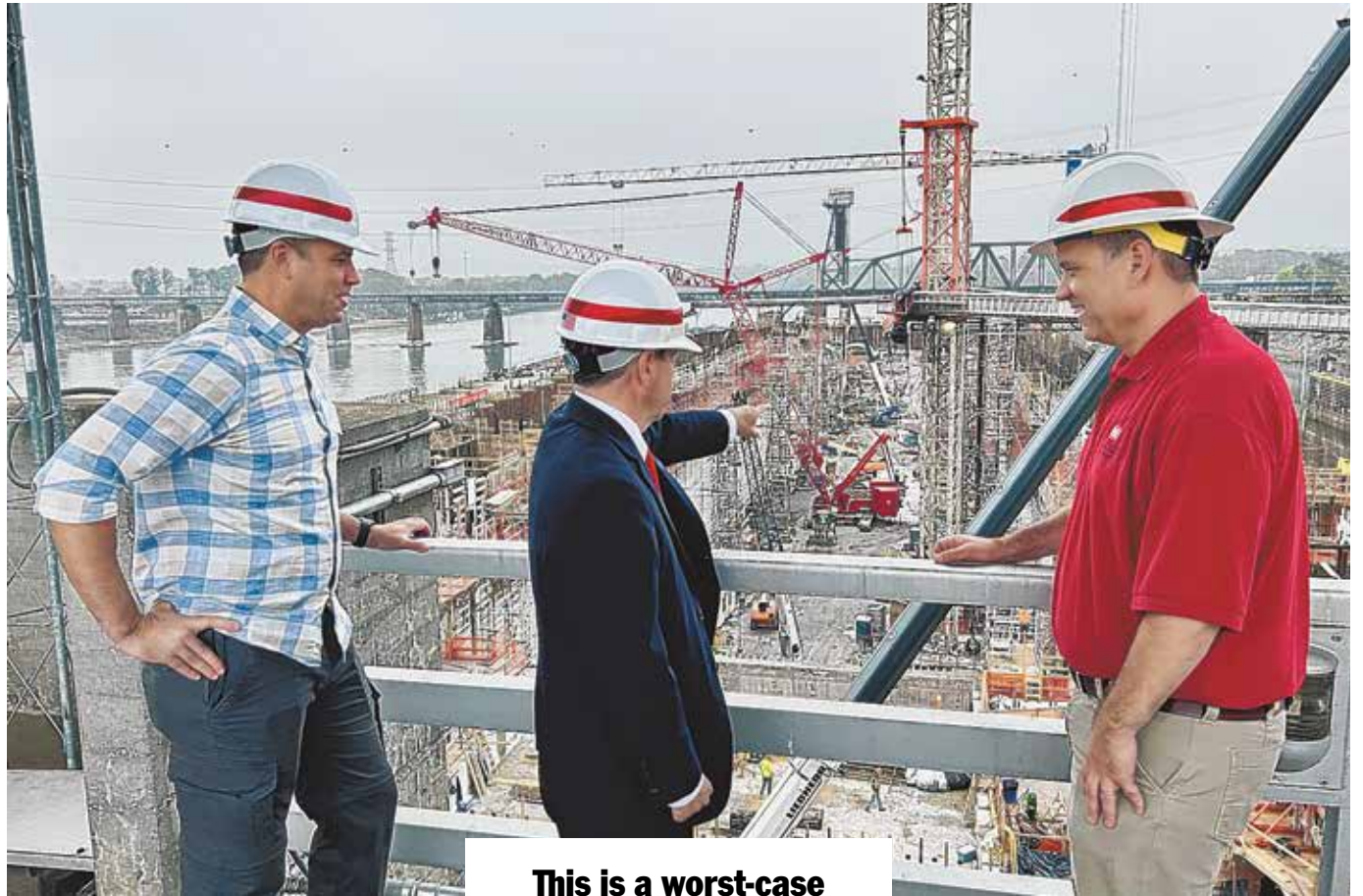
America is in desperate need of an infrastructure overhaul. For years, Americans have heard Democrats like President Joe Biden talk about the need to invest in our nation's infrastructure. Unfortunately, what the American people have gotten under this administration from Biden and Democrats have been misguided efforts that have not improved infrastructure across our great nation and caused inflation to spike to its highest levels in over 40 years.

In fact, recent reviews of the multi-trillion dollar spending packages that President Biden and congressional Democrats forced through between 2021 and 2023 have shown that only 17% of the \$1.1 trillion for direct investments in infrastructure and energy has been spent. We face a unique situation in which Biden and Democrats have forced through trillions in spending that has led to record inflation levels while most of the funds remain unused for actual infrastructure projects.

This is a worst-case scenario for the American people: one in which our citizens are left picking up the tab of 40-year high inflation without getting the improved infrastructure our nation direly needs.

In contrast to the failure of leadership from President Biden to rebuild America's infrastructure, my conservative colleagues and I on the House Appropriations Committee recently passed and got signed into law the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Energy and Water appropriations bill, which actually meets our nation's infrastructure needs while reversing the trend of Democrats' out-of-control borrowing and spending that has damaged our economy.

As chairman of Energy and Water



This is a worst-case scenario for the American people: one in which our citizens are left picking up the tab of 40-year high inflation without getting the improved infrastructure our nation direly needs.

Appropriations, I'm proud that my FY24 energy and water bill fully funded the ongoing inland waterways construction projects that are critical for moving goods and people safely and efficiently as well as the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund activities overseen by the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure our ports and harbors nationwide can operate at peak efficiency.

With significant unallocated infrastructure funds remaining and much work to be done, my energy and water bill forced the Biden Administration to repurpose more than \$1.4 billion of existing infrastructure funds to address high-priority projects across America. An example of this can be seen in my home district in East Tennessee with the Army Corps of Engineers' ongoing Chickamauga Lock Replacement Project.

The Chickamauga Lock is nearly 90 years old and is one of our nation's most important waterways for moving goods and people. Over 1 million tons of cargo traverse the Chickamauga Lock each year, and it is the second-most used lock in America for recreational waterborne transportation. It is well understood that completing work on the lock is critical, not only to the Southeastern region of the U.S., but to our entire nation. But when President

Biden unveiled his budget last year, he included no funds to continue construction on this vital infrastructure project, which would have severely undermined progress on the lock.

When my colleagues and I on the Appropriations Committee saw that President Biden's budget overlooked investments in our nation's infrastructure and instead prioritized his pet liberal projects, we took decisive action. Instead of following the Democrat playbook of spending more money that we don't have, we clawed back and repurposed existing dollars and enacted statutes to force Biden and his administration to invest in real infrastructure projects. If we had not done this, Biden and Democrats would have no accountability to the American people for improving our nation's crumbling infrastructure.

There is no doubt that we are in tight fiscal times. Record borrowing and

spending from Biden and D.C. Democrats between 2021 and 2023 drove inflation and caused economic stagnation. My GOP Appropriations Committee colleagues and I cut inflationary spending while still making substantial investments in infrastructure projects nationwide. As we begin the FY25 budget process, my conservative appropriations colleagues and I remain committed to further slashing wasteful and unnecessary spending while meeting America's infrastructure needs.

We can and will rebuild our great country while ending the cycle of borrowing and spending that Biden has created since taking office. House Republican appropriators have proven we can cut inflationary spending while investing in America's infrastructure, and we will do it again.

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Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, R-Tenn., is the chairman of the Energy and Water Subcommittee of Appropriations and also serves on the Energy Subcommittee of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. As chairman of Energy and Water, Fleischmann leads the charge to provide funding for the federal agencies and programs responsible for the United States' national laboratories, water and energy infrastructure, nuclear security, and energy independence.

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