

Pathways to American progress



The next phase of U.S. infrastructure

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The Highway Trust Fund drives our economy



By U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer,
R-N.D.

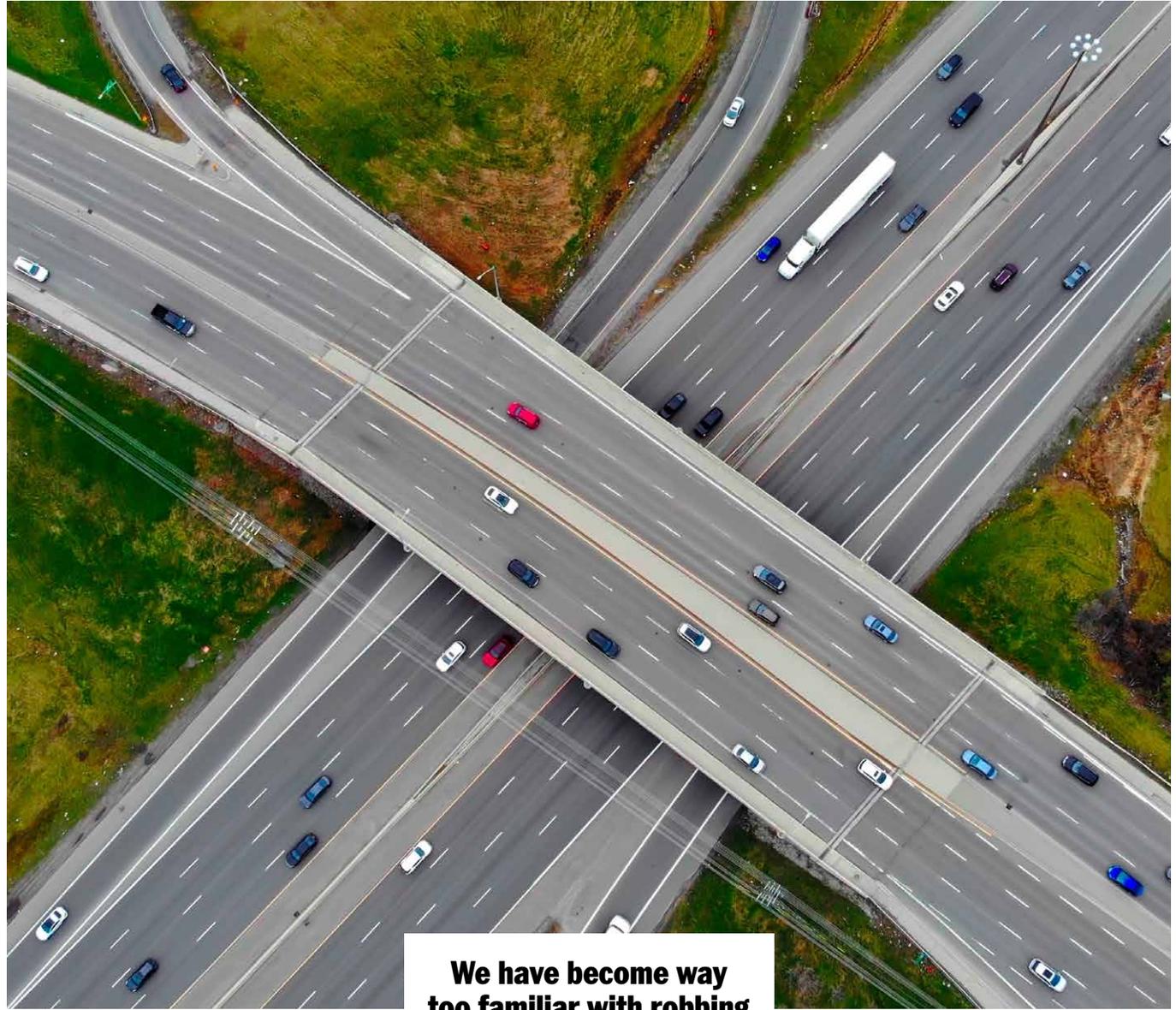
Whether North Dakotans are delivering crops to the local elevator or loading the family into a minivan for a road trip, well-maintained roads are essential. At the center of it all is the National Highway System (NHS), the network which moves people and freight across the nation.

Highways are the heartbeat of interstate commerce, a constitutional duty of the federal government. More goods are transported by truck than by rail, air, water and pipelines combined. Our economy is driven by the free flow of goods across our patchwork of roads and highways.

However, the Highway Trust Fund faces a structural funding shortfall, threatening the long-term ability of states to maintain and modernize transportation infrastructure. When President Dwight Eisenhower established the interstate system in the 1950s, the Highway Trust Fund was a “pay as you go” model where users of the road system paid for its maintenance and construction through taxes on gasoline, diesel and tires.

As a result, the fund is based on the deceptively simple principle of “user pays.” Since 1993, Americans have contributed 18.3 cents to the Highway Trust Fund for every single gallon of gasoline. As cars have become more efficient or drivers switch to hybrid or electric vehicles (EVs), the result is fewer dollars flowing to the fund all while road use is increasing. More users and less revenue is not sustainable.

For over 25 years, expenditures from the Highway Trust Fund have exceeded its revenues. In 2024, there were \$57 billion in expenditures, but only \$43 billion in incoming revenues. Over the last 15 years, Congress has transferred money from the Treasury General Fund – to the



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We have become way too familiar with robbing Peter to pay Paul in Washington, and it's time to put Highway Trust Fund bailouts in the rearview mirror.

tune of \$275 billion – while punting on the source of the problem. Offloading the burden on all taxpayers in the form of federal debt – rather than sticking with the “user pays” model Eisenhower envisioned – is not a solution.

How do we stay true to “user pays” and ensure the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund?

First, all highway vehicles should contribute. If they drive on it, they pay for it. According to the Argonne National Laboratory, Americans purchased approximately 1.2 million battery electric vehicles in 2024 alone, the vast majority of which were in California. In plain terms, a Fargo mom taking her kids to hockey practice in a Suburban is paying into the highway system while coastal elites who can afford EVs are getting a free ride from the federal government down Sunset Boulevard. The disparity is real.

One widely discussed solution is a federal registration fee for EVs dedicated to the Highway Trust Fund. In fact, 39 states have already implemented registration fees for EVs, recognizing

these vehicles use the system but do not contribute through gas taxes. At a minimum, this framework would reduce the Highway Trust Fund shortfall and ensure EVs pay their fair share. A \$200 annual fee, for each of the 5.7 million EVs in the nation could add over \$1.14 billion to the fund every year.

But I think we can – and should – consider broader policy solutions.

While some suggest a per-mile fee, tracking mileage is fraught with practicality and privacy concerns. One option could be supplementing or replacing the gas tax with an annual registration fee based on weight. Every vehicle in America, from pickup trucks to EVs to hybrid sedans, pays a fee straight to the Highway Trust Fund based on its weight.

Doing nothing is not an option.

We have become way too familiar with robbing Peter to pay Paul in Washington, and it's time to put Highway Trust Fund bailouts in the rearview mirror.

As we debate, negotiate and pass a surface transportation reauthorization this year, I am hopeful my colleagues and I can correct course and stabilize the fund.

Our ability to repair, update, and build out new roads depends on a sustainable “user pays” system.

The American economy is built on the durability of our infrastructure and investments across the NHS is a necessity.

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U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer, North Dakota Republican, is the Chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure. He also serves on the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committees. Cramer previously served three terms as North Dakota's At-Large Member in the U.S. House of Representatives.



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The regulatory backlog threatening Trump's America First infrastructure agenda



By Chris Jahn

America is in a race to rebuild what's aging, strengthen what's vulnerable and modernize what must endure: roads and bridges that move people and commerce, water systems that protect communities and energy infrastructure that powers our nation's growth.

We all understand the basic expectation: infrastructure projects should be completed on time and on budget. That same common-sense standard should apply to the federal process that governs many of the materials that make infrastructure possible: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) implementation of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

TSCA is not a household name, but for the companies and workers who build America, it needs to be. EPA's TSCA program is the gatekeeper for thousands of chemicals essential to modern infrastructure: advanced coatings, sealants, insulation, polymer

technologies, corrosion protection and more. These are the building blocks that determine whether a bridge lasts 50 years or 100, whether a water system resists corrosion and whether energy infrastructure can withstand extreme conditions. Infrastructure projects and chemical reviews depend on timely regulatory decisions that strengthen U.S. competitiveness, not ones that drive innovation and investment overseas.

Congress designed TSCA to protect public health and the environment and to promote innovation. Under TSCA, EPA's review period for new chemical notices runs 90 days from receipt. That's the statutory backbone of predictability so innovators and manufacturers can invest, hire, and produce here in the United States, not overseas.

But nearly a decade after the enactment of bipartisan TSCA reforms, the New Chemicals Program is still not delivering the certainty America's manufacturers need.

Independent watchdogs have put hard numbers to the problem. A January 2025 Government Accountability Office report [found](#) that EPA met the 90-day review deadline less than 10% of the time, a performance gap that undermines manufacturer confidence, strains customer relationships, and weakens American competitiveness in the global marketplace.

The backlog is not theoretical. ACC's latest tracking, as of February 2026, shows [453 new chemicals](#) undergoing EPA review. Of those, only 37 were approved within the mandated 90-day period. And 311 advanced chemistries have been waiting more than a year for an agency decision. That uncertainty ripples through supply chains and it can ultimately delay the very infrastructure

projects Americans depend on every day. Chemistry helps build the future. But we can't build America on a backlog.

On top of that, 2026 brings an urgent deadline Congress cannot miss: EPA's authority to collect TSCA user fees expires on Sept. 30, 2026. Those fees are not a side issue; they fund roughly one-quarter of EPA's TSCA program. Without reauthorization, EPA loses a critical funding source, guaranteeing even longer delays, deeper uncertainty, and mounting pressure on American innovators and manufacturers to take their investments abroad. That is not the direction this administration has charted for America.

President Donald Trump has made that direction clear. In his memorandum on modernizing permitting, the president [directed](#) that his "Administration will apply modern technologies ... to deliver outstanding results at 21st-century speeds." Congress should bring that same urgency to TSCA in 2026: modernize implementation, sharpen accountability, and keep America's innovators, manufacturers, and infrastructure projects moving at the pace the president has demanded.

EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin and his team have worked hard to stabilize and improve the TSCA program. But the administrator cannot do this alone. Congress has a key role to play.

So, what should Congress do?

First, reauthorize EPA's authority to collect TSCA user fees, and do it well before Sept. 30. This will give EPA and President Trump the legislative tools to finish the job on improving TSCA. Waiting until the final days of Sept. invites disruption across EPA programs and across domestic supply chains that cannot afford more uncertainty.

Second, simply reauthorizing fees alone is not enough. Congress should pair it with targeted, practical improvements that help EPA deliver timely, science-driven chemical reviews. This is not a call to weaken TSCA protections, it is a call to make TSCA work as intended: clear standards, transparent timelines, outcomes that American manufacturers can plan around, and the public can depend on.

Both the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee have introduced long-awaited TSCA fee reauthorization and improvement legislative discussion drafts. Legislative improvements to TSCA can help the program work better for public health, the environment and American competitiveness alike.

Finally, Congress and EPA should embrace the kind of transparency the public can understand and trust. When EPA misses a deadline, Americans deserve to know why. Transparent, clear completeness standards and consistent communication will restore confidence that TSCA is protecting people and enabling American innovation and manufacturing simultaneously, not as competing priorities.

America's infrastructure ambitions require American capacity: domestic manufacturing, resilient supply chains and a regulatory system that can keep up with the pace of innovation. Congress has the opportunity, and the obligation, to deliver that system before Sept. 30.

American chemistry builds America's infrastructure, and America's success depends on getting this right.

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Chris Jahn is President & CEO of the American Chemistry Council.

Your Car. Your Phone. Your Healthcare. All at Risk.

Every product that empowers your life, from the car you are driving, to the smartphone in your hand, to the medical devices you need – all rely on American chemistry. And right now, Washington is getting in the way.

America's primary chemical management law, TSCA, is broken. A slow, fractured review process is blocking the innovations that keep American factories running, shelves stocked, and workers employed.

While Washington stalls, our global competitors don't. This isn't a chemistry problem. It's a jobs problem. A prices problem. An American competitiveness problem. There's a solution, but the clock is ticking: advance pending TSCA legislation.

**Congress:
Fix TSCA now, before it cost us more.**

**American success relies on
American Chemistry.**



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AP PHOTO/MATT ROURKE

Marcus Coleman holds his daughter Dalilah Coleman as President Donald Trump delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress in the House chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026.

Dalilah's Law: Restoring safety on our roadways



By U.S. Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo.

On Feb. 25, an 80,000-pound truck was seen driving the wrong way for miles down Highway 61, a divided highway in my congressional district. Thankfully, the Missouri State Highway Patrol responded to the incident and placed the driver out of service before anyone was injured. Upon inspection, the driver failed to demonstrate English language proficiency; he was unable to properly identify or understand road signage. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated safety incident.

In 2025 alone, we saw at least 17 fatal crashes and 30 deaths that were caused by unqualified foreign drivers illegally operating commercial motor vehicles. The open border policies of the Biden Administration fueled

this growing safety crisis. Thankfully, President Donald Trump and Secretary Sean Duffy recognize the danger posed by having unqualified truck drivers on our roadways and are working diligently to address it.

In June 2025, Secretary Duffy directed the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to

are given when they enter the industry.

FMCSA and local law enforcement also recently conducted the first wave of Operation SafeDRIVE, a multi-state initiative focused on ensuring that drivers meet qualification standards and removing unsafe drivers from the nation's roads. This first wave lasted three days and resulted in the removal

to thank Rep. David Rouzer, R-N.C., chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, for his leadership on Dalilah's Law.

Dalilah's Law will ensure that all truck drivers on our roads are qualified. This is common sense. If you can't understand highway signs or communicate with police officers, you have no business driving a semi-truck.

Under current law, CDL holders are required to demonstrate English proficiency to obtain a CDL. However, some states allow the written portion of the CDL exam to be administered in languages other than English. California, for example, allows the written exam to be administered in 20 different languages. Not only does Dalilah's Law close this loophole by ensuring all portions of the CDL exam are administered only in the English language; it also ensures that each state may only issue CDLs to individuals in our country legally with a clean driving record.

Dalilah's Law codifies many of the important actions taken by this Administration and ensures our families aren't needlessly exposed to unqualified, dangerous drivers on the road.

I commend President Trump and Secretary Duffy on their efforts to make Americans and our roadways safer. At the end of the day, this is a safety issue, and Dalilah's Law is good, timely, commonsense legislation.

Rep. Sam Graves represents Missouri's 6th Congressional District. He is chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

We need to ensure our truck drivers are held to the highest safety standard. That starts with the instruction they are given when they enter the industry.

perform a nationwide audit of each state's issuance of non-domiciled Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs). The audit uncovered alarming rates of state noncompliance. For example, the review found 18 states improperly issued non-domiciled CDLs, including California, which had improperly issued approximately 17,000 CDLs; and Minnesota, which improperly issued one-third of their non-domiciled CDLs.

The administration is committed to cracking down on all those contributing to this crisis of unqualified drivers on our roads. FMCSA recently removed nearly 3,000 training providers from the Training Provider Registry for failure to meet curriculum standards or falsifying student data. We need to ensure our truck drivers are held to the highest safety standard. That starts with the instruction they

of nearly 2,000 unqualified truckers across 26 states and Washington, D.C.

The administration has taken several additional steps to make our nation's roadways safer. Most recently, during his State of the Union Address, President Trump encouraged Congress to pass Dalilah's Law, and ensure that only qualified truck drivers can obtain a Commercial Driver's License. Dalilah's Law is named in honor of Dalilah Coleman, who was only 5 years old when an illegal alien crashed a big rig into her family's car on Highway 395 in San Bernardino County, Calif. As a result, Dalilah sustained major injuries that she will have to live with for the rest of her life.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has been working closely with the administration on addressing this safety priority. I'd like

Keep America moving with vital infrastructure investments



By U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, R-N.C.

Our nation's infrastructure impacts the lives of all Americans. It is what connects us, unites us and facilitates our everyday activities, both personal and business. With our roads and bridges rapidly aging past their intended lifespans, reauthorization of the highway programs is imperative. The current law, known as the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill and also referred to as the "Highway Bill," is set to expire on Sept. 30, 2026. As chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, my top priority is enacting a new Highway Bill that makes smart, targeted investments in traditional infrastructure focusing on roads, bridges and freight corridors to keep our country competitive, our economy growing and Americans connected.

Current law (including permitting requirements) overreaches, diverting resources from our core infrastructure needs and stifling innovation. It funds unnecessary projects and delays crucial infrastructure investments with red tape. The next Highway Bill will reduce bureaucratic delays and cut waste to refocus on our most essential infrastructure needs. We are working with President Donald J. Trump, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves, R-Mo., and our Senate colleagues to ensure this remains an America-first, results-oriented process that will move America forward.

Infrastructure policy is about more than just helping America build; it is about safely transporting people — precious lives that depend on reliable systems. In 2025, we saw at least 17 fatal crashes nationwide caused by unqualified foreign drivers, leading President



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Trump to call on Congress in his State of the Union address to clean up a system of neglect and mismanagement. The Department of Transportation continues to expose states across the country issuing Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs) to illegal immigrants and unqualified foreign drivers. To restore integrity to our licensing system, I introduced H.R. 5688, the Dalilah's Law. This commonsense legislation ensures only individuals with lawful immigration status and a legitimate reason to operate commercial vehicles are entrusted with a CDL, addressing the serious threat that lax issuance policies pose to everyone on the road.

Safety on our public transit systems is equally non-negotiable. The senseless murder of Iryna Zarutskya on Charlotte's light rail last August should be a wake-up call for every transit agency and every lawmaker in America. Following this tragedy, I convened transit and law enforcement leaders to identify concrete, actionable steps we can take to ensure riders are transported safely and securely. The safety of all Americans is paramount, and it will remain at the very center of the debate as we move the Highway Bill through the legislative process.

The new Golden Age of American infrastructure growth will not be possible without funding certainty and flexibility. Formula funding, which provides

Prioritizing state-level decision-making over a one-size-fits-all approach will ensure this funding translates to efficient improvements for our roads, bridges and freight corridors across the country.

funding certainty and allows states the flexibility to invest in their highest-value projects, will be a top priority in the Highway Bill. States and localities, not Washington bureaucrats, know their own transportation needs best. Prioritizing state-level decision-making over a one-size-fits-all approach will ensure this funding translates to efficient improvements for our roads, bridges and freight corridors across the country.

To further strip away burdensome regulations, we must also fix our nation's broken permitting process. I was proud to support the PERMIT Act, which passed the House this past December. It will advance regulatory reforms to provide clear rules and predictable timelines for Clean Water Act permits. Time is money, no matter the project. Eliminating regulatory delays prevents project costs from skyrocketing. The Senate should pass the PERMIT Act

and get it to the President's desk to ensure the investments of the upcoming Highway Bill can materialize within a reasonable timeframe.

Finally, we must address the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. Without intervention, the fund faces a projected shortfall of about \$295 billion over the next 10 years. For decades, the core principle of this fund has been simple: those who use our roads should pay for them, mainly through federal gasoline and diesel taxes. However, as vehicles have become more fuel efficient and electric vehicles more prevalent, this revenue stream fails to cover expenditures. Congress has an opportunity here to begin a course correction so that infrastructure needs are paid in full.

Enhancing the safety, efficiency, and reliability of our roads and bridges is more than a policy goal. It is a necessity for a resilient transportation network that moves people, goods, and services safely across our nation. Infrastructure remains an area of bipartisan cooperation, and I look forward to doing my part to deliver a safer, stronger America.

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U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, North Carolina Republican, represents the state's Seventh Congressional District. He serves as chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.

US-made batteries can help power America's AI future



By Roger Miksad

Artificial intelligence is dramatically reshaping our economy and national competitiveness. Policy-makers must confront a critical question: How can America's energy infrastructure evolve to support this high-tech transformation?

Achieving AI's potential will require massive investments in power generation and distribution, and changes to how we deliver that power. According to the Electric Power Research Institute, power demand driven by AI in the U.S. could increase tenfold by 2030, with some projections suggesting AI data centers will consume 12-20% of all energy in the United States by 2028. This megatrend will strain the nation's aging energy grid, alter electricity price dynamics, and increase the risk of power disruptions.

At Battery Council International (BCI), we strongly believe that batteries are a critical component of infrastructure deployments that will ensure new technologies can integrate smoothly into our existing grid without disruption. BCI is currently working with our members to support this evolution. While there is great promise to emerging artificial intelligence technologies, there are also clear challenges ahead.

The battery industry is poised to partner with both industry and local communities in mitigating risks and finding an effective path forward. BCI and its members are committed to helping America deploy the best battery technology so the nation can reap the full benefits of AI — all without sacrificing safety or affordability in the communities that host necessary data and energy infrastructure.

Intense, cyclical peaks in energy demand driven by AI compute cycles



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Proven energy storage technologies – particularly lead batteries, which have long delivered safety and reliability for critical infrastructure – are a necessary part of meeting the future power demands of AI.

strain the power grid in ways it was never designed to handle. Batteries are an effective tool in mitigating these risks thanks to their ability to store energy during periods of lower use, and then deploy that energy — nearly instantaneously — to meet the spikes in demand driven by AI.

Modernizing energy infrastructure is a costly long-term endeavor, and power generators already experience regulatory delays in upgrading their infrastructure. Data centers will require the rapid buildout of new grid interconnections to support energy-hungry AI applications, and batteries can bridge the gap by supplementing existing infrastructure instead of requiring wholesale upgrades.

Batteries are already essential to every community across America during power outages. When grid power falters, they provide seamless backup power to cell towers, 911 call centers, hospitals and data centers. Additionally,

batteries reduce the need for on-site diesel generators to bridge energy gaps, offering a supplemental energy solution that meets concerns around emissions, noise pollution and local water usage.

Proven energy storage technologies — particularly lead batteries, which have long delivered safety and reliability for critical infrastructure — are a necessary part of meeting the future power demands of AI.

For utilities and data center operators evaluating insurance exposure, risk profiles, and long-term operational predictability, batteries are a well-understood and highly reliable solution. Batteries are effective load-leveling tools and have already been deployed in many other applications in which companies look to store power from the grid when it is affordable and draw on that electricity during periods of elevated rates.

As we look to the immediate future of AI, we must make the most of the

tools that are currently available, and the products that have a domestically secure supply chain that is independent from foreign adversaries. America will find no better solution to this challenge than lead batteries.

These essential batteries are readily available and made in America, with U.S.-sourced materials. Lead batteries have a domestic manufacturing network that is already scaled up to meet urgent demand, with domestic manufacturers powering more than 106,000 direct jobs and more than \$35 billion in direct business output nationwide.

Additionally, thanks to the nearly infinite recyclability of this key battery technology, 99% of spent batteries are remade into new energy storage solutions — with the vast majority of recycling conducted at high-performing North American facilities that support onshore jobs.

BCI members have broadened the energy storage offerings they produce. They are using lessons from the lead battery ecosystem to build similarly robust domestic supply chains in support of flow batteries and sodium battery technology. These innovative solutions are also critical to supporting AI through domestic manufacturing and materials.

The industry is also researching improvements to legacy battery technology through the BCI-led Consortium for Lead Battery Leadership. This public-private partnership has brought together manufacturing leaders and U.S. National Laboratories with a clear focus on improving storage capacity and reducing costs, particularly in stationary storage applications.

With more than 120 years of proven safety, reliability, and domestic production, America's battery industry offers immediately scalable production that does not depend on foreign adversaries. U.S. battery companies already provide power for nearly 300 million vehicles, school buses and military vehicles through a resilient U.S. supply chain. This manufacturing success is a cornerstone of American economic strength and deserves continued support.

As the nation moves toward an AI-driven future and global competition intensifies, BCI and its members stand ready to build on our proud legacy of providing dependable energy to American consumers and businesses. Through smart policy decisions today, we can ensure the next era of American innovation will be powered by batteries made in the USA.

Roger Miksad is president and executive director of Battery Council International.



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SAFETY



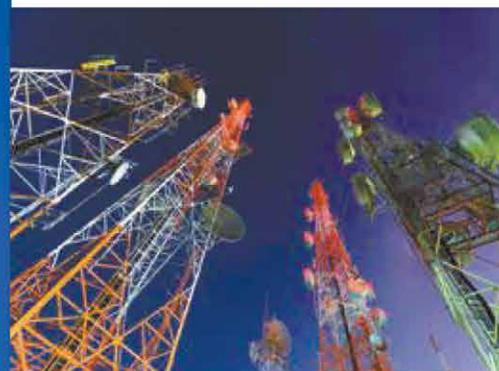
BCI helped develop the industry's first blood lead test, and continues to drive industry-led standards where its members hit internal targets that are stricter than OSHA requirements.

INNOVATION



Working with U.S. National Labs, BCI has pioneered public-private partnerships that drive innovation and fuel real-world commercial improvements.

GROWTH



U.S. battery manufacturing contributes 106,050 jobs, and the big picture is even greater — with +\$10 trillion in battery-related output from the domestic battery industry.



Visit BatteryCouncil.org or contact info@batteryCouncil.org for more information

This bipartisan solution could solve America's water crisis



By U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal, D-Calif.

On the Central Coast of California, water is at the core of our way of life. It is the driving force of our agriculture, the bedrock of our economy and the most

The U.S. Water Alliance estimates that a single day of downtime in U.S. water service could result in close to \$50 billion in lost economic activity. We cannot afford to wait for the next disaster to prove this forecast right.

basic necessity for everyone who calls our region home. But today, the systems we rely on to deliver our water are under strain. As we navigate deeper into the 21st century, the climate emergency we once discussed as a distant threat has become our reality. We are living through a cycle of extremes where historic droughts are followed by punishing floods, putting a strain on our infrastructure that it was never designed to handle.

That is why I have led a bipartisan group of my colleagues to introduce the Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act. This legislation represents an increasingly rare area of bipartisan cooperation, and I'm proud to be leading this effort.

The Threat of Extreme Weather

Our water infrastructure is aging at the exact moment the environment is becoming more volatile. In my district, we've seen how quickly a drought can deplete our reservoirs, followed by storms that threaten to overwhelm our drainage and treatment facilities. When these systems fail, the consequences are

severe — and the risks we face on the Central Coast are shared by communities across the country.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's most recent Clean Watersheds Needs Survey and Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, the United States will

effort alongside a bipartisan coalition, including Representatives David Valadao, R-Calif.; Troy A. Carter, Sr., D-La.; Jeff Van Drew, R-N.J.; and Brian Mast, R-Fla. We may represent different corners of the country and different political parties, but we all see the same urgent need to bolster our water systems.

The Time to Act is Today

We can no longer treat water infrastructure as an "out of sight, out of mind" issue. Every time a family in Santa Barbara turns on the tap or a farmer in Santa Maria irrigates their crops, they are relying on a complex web of infrastructure that is currently under immense pressure.



A vital part of the region's infrastructure, Stevens Creek Reservoir provides water storage, groundwater recharge, and flood protection for Santa Clara County.

have to spend at least \$1.25 trillion over twenty years to meet the nation's water infrastructure needs. Without action, we risk more than additional boil water advisories. We risk losing a consistent supply of clean drinking water, the flooding of our neighborhoods during storms and a devastating blow to our national economy. In fact, the U.S. Water Alliance estimates that a single day of downtime in U.S. water service could result in close to \$50 billion in lost economic activity. We cannot afford to wait for the next disaster to prove this forecast right.

A Bipartisan Path Forward

In a Washington often defined by division, water infrastructure remains a common ground. I am proud to lead this

Our bill is built around three essential pillars to protect our communities and prepare for the future. First, it invests in competitive grants that help local water agencies modernize aging equipment and infrastructure. Second, it strengthens drought and flood resilience by supporting projects that boost water efficiency, expand recycling and upgrade drainage systems to withstand extreme storms. And third, it recognizes that today's threats aren't only physical. As water systems become more interconnected, they also become more vulnerable to cyberattacks. This legislation ensures utilities have the tools and resources they need to defend our water supply from emerging digital threats.

Investing in resilience today is far cheaper than paying for disaster recovery tomorrow. By passing this bipartisan legislation, we are choosing to be proactive. We are choosing to protect our way of life and ensure that the Central Coast — and the rest of the nation — has the peace of mind that one of life's most basic, yet critical, resources will be available, regardless of what the future brings.

Let's get this done, together.

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Rep. Salud Carbajal represents California's 24th Congressional District, encompassing Santa Barbara County and portions of San Luis Obispo County and Ventura County. He serves on the House Committees on Agriculture, Armed Services, and Transportation and Infrastructure.

America's maritime renaissance depends on building the industrial base



By U.S. Rep. Mike Ezell, R-Miss.

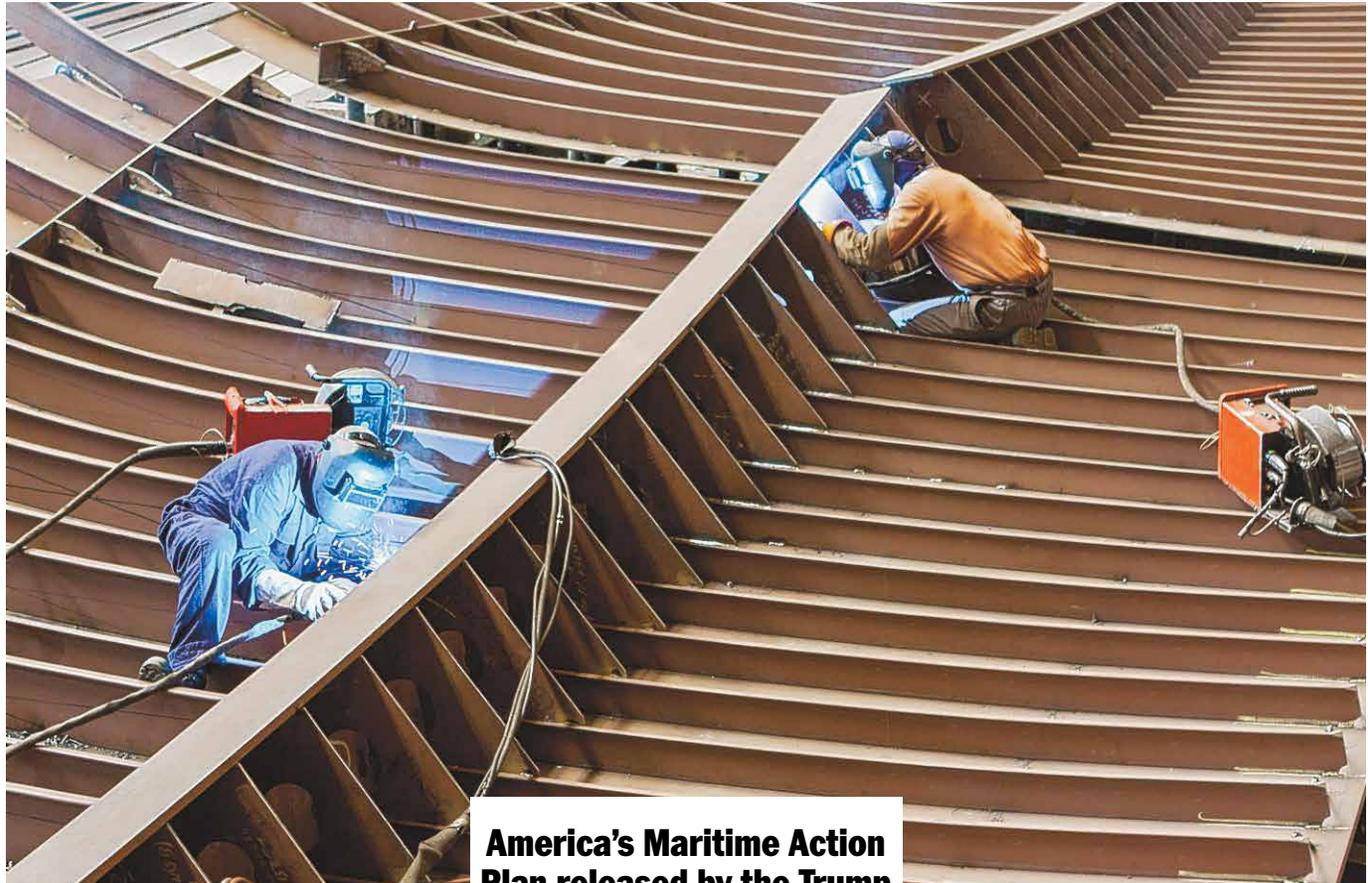
The United States is unquestionably both a great power and the world's leader in many technologies and industries.

To our detriment, we are no longer either a world power or a world leader in commercial shipping, or in the scope of the U.S. maritime industrial base. Over the course of decades our U.S. flag merchant fleet dwindled, our ability to build commercial ships has diminished and we have ceded leadership on maritime issues to international competitors.

Great nations and nations that are sea powers must have a presence on the maritime commons beyond just their navies. The United States must be able to supply itself from the sea and it must be able to sustain its military forces when deployed overseas. Equally critical is the need for the United States to finally address the absence of an American presence throughout so much of the maritime industrial base.

America's Maritime Action Plan released by the Trump administration in February is a comprehensive vision for the renaissance of the U.S. maritime industrial base. It creates a clear path forward for building industrial capacities, strengthening alliances with friendly nations and creating economic opportunities for Americans from the coasts to the plains.

The cornerstone of America's Maritime Action Plan is the reinvigoration of our domestic shipbuilding capacity. The United States is unparalleled in building warships. No other nation can construct military vessels of the size and complexity of those deployed by our Navy. The same cannot be said of our ability to build many classes of the most common commercial seagoing vessels. The Action Plan acknowledges that less



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America's Maritime Action Plan released by the Trump administration in February is a comprehensive vision for the renaissance of the U.S. maritime industrial base. It creates a clear path forward for building industrial capacities, strengthening alliances with friendly nations and creating economic opportunities for Americans from the coasts to the plains.

than 1% of commercial ships operating globally were built in the United States, while laying out the measures necessary to increase that number. The president's plan articulates specifically how attracting investment, reforming regulations, offering compelling incentives and embracing new technologies will lead to commercial ships once again being built in the United States.

Building more commercial vessels in the United States will lead to benefits beyond those found within the perimeters of updated, expanded domestic shipyards.

Building more ships will expand the number of jobs available to Americans both in yards and aboard ships. It will expand the necessity of training programs, creating opportunities for vocational and professional education from high schools to state maritime academies and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The maritime industrial base will grow as more of the inputs necessary for building a commercial ship are manufactured in the United States. Expanded economies of scale in terms of workers, materials and expertise will allow U.S. companies to venture into related activities such as building port cranes and intermodal equipment.

The most important benefits of America's Maritime Action Plan are those associated with national security

and resilience. We are more aware than ever of how world events affect supply chains. The United States benefits from international commerce, but we must never be in a position where Americans are hostages to trade. A commercial fleet of U.S.-flagged vessels operating internationally assures we will always have an organic ability to supply ourselves and our military no matter what.

President Donald Trump has demonstrated leadership on a public policy issue that has been given too little attention for too long. I will work with the administration to implement key

provisions of America's Maritime Action Plan that are within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee of which I chair. Further, I will be holding the Coast Guard and the Maritime Administration accountable to act where they can without legislation that will achieve the goals articulated by President Trump.

While shipbuilding is an economic engine for my congressional district and state, it is also a major part of the economy in numerous other areas of the U.S., plus wide-ranging downstream benefits to even more parts of the country. America's Maritime Action Plan represents a unique opportunity for decisive action that will not only improve U.S. competitiveness, and National security, but the economic wellbeing of so many of our fellow citizens. This is a chance not to be wasted because the benefits are far too great. Join me in supporting the president's vision for America's maritime renaissance.

Rep. Mike Ezell represents Mississippi's Fourth Congressional District, which includes the Mississippi Gulf Coast and parts of the Pine Belt. He serves as chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where he works to strengthen national security, support maritime industries, and enhance coastal resilience.



AP PHOTO/YUKI IWAMURA

People wait in a TSA line at the John F. Kennedy International Airport, Sunday, March 22, 2026, in New York.

Federal aviation workers deserve paycheck predictability, stability



By Chris Sununu

TSA employees are on track to receive another \$0 paycheck this week, and security lines are unfathomably long at some of our nation's airports. The solution to all of this lies directly in the hands of Congress — the very people who were elected by American voters to serve the public interest. Yet every time lawmakers fly out of Washington, D.C., they walk right by TSA officers who aren't getting paid because Congress refuses to work together and reach consensus.

The bottom line is that Congress must get to the table immediately and work with urgency to get TSA employees paid. But their work doesn't stop there.

It's critical for Congress to enact legislation that stops this from ever happening again. Right now, lawmakers are sitting on their hands doing nothing with three

It's getting increasingly difficult for TSA employees to put food on the table, put gas in the car and pay the rent. They are having to make tough decisions. Pay the power bill or buy groceries? Childcare or rent? Car loan or kids' clothes? Airports are organizing food drives and distributing grocery gift cards.

Right now, lawmakers are sitting on their hands doing nothing with three viable, bipartisan bills that could prevent this mess and ensure that federal aviation workers ... get paid during shutdowns.

viable, bipartisan bills that could prevent this mess and ensure that federal aviation workers — including TSA officers, U.S. Customs clearance officers at airports and air traffic controllers — get paid during shutdowns.

Specifically, Congress should pass the *Aviation Funding Solvency Act* and the *Aviation Funding Stability Act*, which would guarantee air traffic controllers are paid regardless of the government's funding status; and the *Keep America Flying Act*, which would provide the same protections to TSA officers who are tasked every day with keeping Americans secure in the skies.

"This is not the American dream that people sign up for. When they go to work, they expect to at least get a paycheck. And I think that's fair," said Tanja Mitchell Fowler, a former TSA employee, on TV this past weekend.

The work callout rate is soaring, upwards of 25, 30 and even 50% at some airports.

Wait times at security checkpoints can be up to four hours, amid peak spring break travel season.

Recently, nine airline CEOs and I wrote an open letter to Congress citing a national survey showing 93% of Americans support paying federal aviation

workers, such as TSA, during government shutdowns. Additionally, 88% of Americans say long lines and extended wait times at airport security checkpoints are likely to be repeated if TSA officers continue to work without pay during future shutdowns.

Many people are asking, "What can I do to help?"

We, the American public, can do two things. First, extend a smile, a kind word or a nice gesture to TSA officers. A simple "thank you" can go a long way. Second, call your member of Congress and demand they pay TSA. You can visit Payfederalaviationworkers.com and send a pre-written letter to your representative and senators. They need to hear from their constituents!

Article I of the U.S. Constitution says, "The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States." Hardworking aviation security personnel deserve to be paid, too — and immediately. It's imperative that Congress gives them paycheck predictability and stability by codifying permanent solutions. Congress must act now!

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Chris Sununu is president and CEO of Airlines for America.



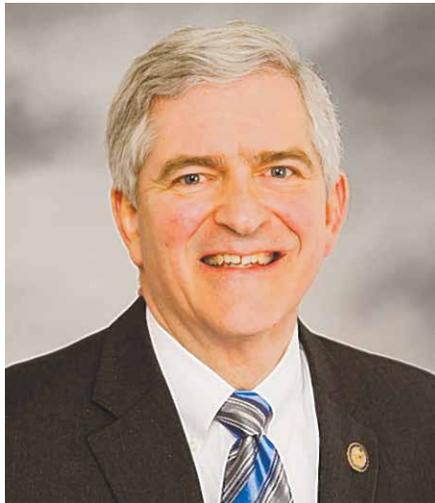
**CONGRESS,
AIRPORTS SHOULDN'T
LOOK LIKE THIS.**

**Congress, you're getting paid.
It's past time to get TSA paid.**



Airlines for America

Let's build America's future



By U.S. Rep. Daniel Webster, R-Fla.

For generations, America's infrastructure has served as the backbone of our economic strength. From the interstate highway system to our ports, pipelines, rail networks, spaceports and power grids, the infrastructure built by previous generations has enabled the United States to become the most productive economy in the world.

But today, many of those systems are aging. Our supply chain faces increased strain, and our energy infrastructure is racing to meet demand. Communities across the country — from major cities to rural towns — need reliable investment to modernize the infrastructure that keeps our economy moving and growing.

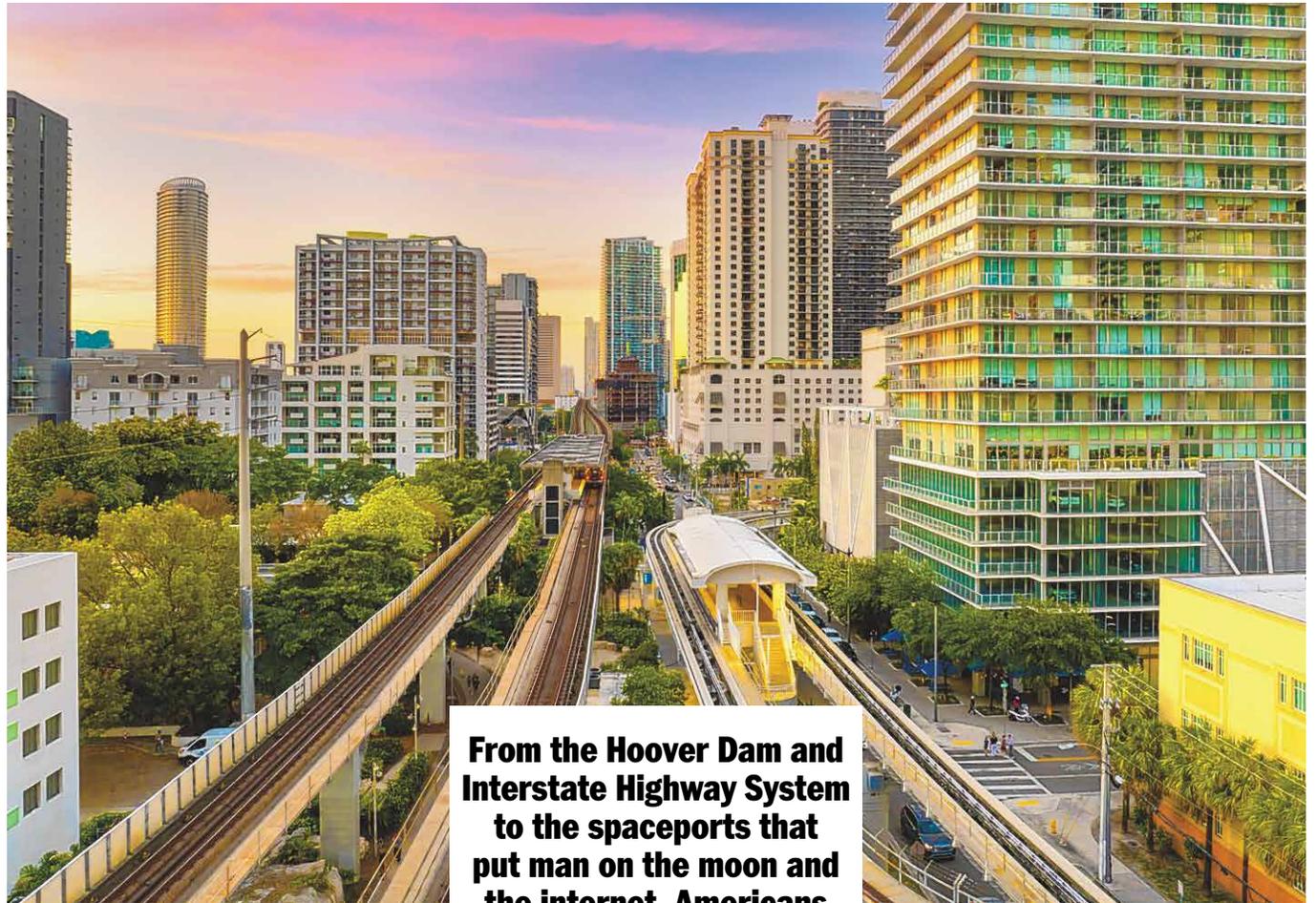
Washington has long agreed that America must improve its infrastructure but has been divided on how to do it responsibly.

For too long, Washington's answer has been to spend taxpayer dollars. Massive spending packages have promised transformation but too often delivered bloated costs and bureaucratic delays. At a time when our national debt exceeds \$38 trillion, relying solely on taxpayer dollars is neither sustainable nor sufficient to meet our nation's infrastructure needs.

That's why I introduced the *Federal Infrastructure Bank Act*, legislation that would establish a Federal Infrastructure Bank to facilitate private investment in economically viable infrastructure projects that provide a public benefit.

The approach is simple. Instead of asking American taxpayers to shoulder the burden of rebuilding infrastructure, we should leverage private investment to finance projects that generate long-term economic value.

Under this proposal, the Infrastructure Bank would provide loans, loan guarantees and equity investments



From the Hoover Dam and Interstate Highway System to the spaceports that put man on the moon and the internet, Americans have never been afraid to build, innovate or dream bigger than the challenges before us.

for infrastructure projects across the United States. Projects could include roads, bridges, ports, energy infrastructure, freight rail, power grids, wastewater systems and other critical assets that support American commerce and daily life.

Unlike other proposals, this bank would be entirely capitalized through private investment — not taxpayer dollars. That means infrastructure improvements can be funded without increasing the deficit or burden on American families.

The bank will get its money from pension funds, mutual funds, endowments, and individuals who are looking for secure, robust investments — bonds that can be traded easily or held for many years. The Federal Infrastructure Bank will provide that kind of deep, liquid market, helping investors as well as the communities that will benefit from better infrastructure.

My bill would also ensure that American infrastructure remains secure from foreign adversaries. By prohibiting projects controlled or influenced by the Chinese Communist Party or other hostile foreign actors, this bill ensures that infrastructure investment serves American interests.

Thanks to President Donald Trump's leadership and the America First economic policies enacted by Republicans, the United States has seen trillions

of dollars in new investment in U.S. manufacturing, technology, and infrastructure. President Trump has also recognized how sovereign wealth funds around the world generate reliable long-term returns while strengthening national economies. Shortly after taking office, President Trump signed an executive order directing his administration to develop a plan for establishing a sovereign wealth fund for the United States. This initiative would strengthen America's long-term financial position and promote economic leadership for generations to come.

My *Federal Infrastructure Bank Act* can help create the platform for those kinds of investment here at home.

By encouraging private investment, empowering states and communities, and protecting taxpayer dollars the *Federal Infrastructure Bank Act* offers a commonsense path to modernize the infrastructure that powers American prosperity.

As our nation prepares to celebrate its 250th anniversary, we are reminded that every generation of Americans has been called upon to build the future it

will leave to those who come after them. The roads, railways, ports and energy infrastructure we rely on today were built by Americans who believed in the promise of tomorrow.

There has never been a challenge too large for Americans. From the Hoover Dam and Interstate Highway System to the spaceports that put man on the moon and the internet, Americans have never been afraid to build, innovate or dream bigger than the challenges before us.

As we look forward to the next 250 years, modernizing America's infrastructure requires a strong vision and partnership. Both government and the private sector have an important role to play, and the Federal Infrastructure Bank helps leverage that relationship. By creating a modern financing tool that unlocks private investment while maintaining strong oversight and accountability, the Federal Infrastructure Bank Act will help build opportunity, strengthen our economy, and ensure the next generation inherits a nation equipped for the challenges ahead.

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Rep. Daniel Webster represents Florida's 11th congressional district. He is a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee where he also serves as chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.



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Spanning the Susquehanna River, the Market Street Bridge serves as a vital link between Wilkes-Barre and Kingston.

Safe bridges shouldn't be just for big cities



By U.S. Rep. Rob Bresnahan, R-Penn.

If you want to understand the importance of local input of on infrastructure funding in America, look no further than the bridges across Northeastern Pennsylvania, from major crossings like the Water Street Bridge in Pittston to small county bridges in Wayne and Pike counties. About one-fourth of the bridges in our region are considered structurally deficient, but every one of them is essential to the communities that depend on them every day.

Bridges connect people to their jobs, children to their schools, farmers to their markets, and families to hospitals and emergency services. These structures rarely make national headlines, but they are essential to everyday life. When a bridge falls into disrepair or is forced to close, the consequences ripple

through an entire community.

That is why I introduced the Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success Act with my colleague, Representative Kristen McDonald Rivet, D-Mich.

Our bipartisan legislation focuses on small communities and the belief that they should not be left behind when it comes to infrastructure investment.

Across the country, thousands of locally owned bridges are aging faster than communities can afford to repair them. Many of these bridges are in rural areas and small towns, where the local tax base is limited and the cost of replacement can far exceed what a township or county can reasonably cover on its own.

Americans who live in smaller communities pay federal taxes just like everyone else. They deserve infrastructure that works just as well.

In places like Northeastern Pennsylvania, local governments often face difficult choices. When funding is scarce, communities may be forced to postpone needed repairs or place weight restrictions on bridges that school buses and emergency vehicles rely on every day. In some cases, bridges are closed entirely, forcing residents to travel miles out of their way simply to reach work, school, or medical care.

For small communities, those extra miles add up quickly. Detours increase transportation costs for local businesses, delay emergency response times, disrupt daily traffic patterns and

place additional strain on already limited local infrastructure.

This problem is not unique to Pennsylvania. Rural communities across America are facing the same challenge, critical infrastructure aging faster than it can be replaced.

The Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success Act helps address this challenge by improving federal support for repairing and replacing locally owned bridges in smaller communities. It helps ensure small, midsized and rural communities receive their fair share of infrastructure investment and gives local leaders the tools they need to deliver real results.

When infrastructure is strong, communities are safer. Every day, school buses, ambulances, fire trucks and law enforcement vehicles depend on these structures. Keeping bridges safe and accessible is not just a transportation issue, it is a matter of public safety.

Strong infrastructure also powers local economies. Businesses can move goods efficiently, farmers can bring products to market and workers can commute safely and reliably. Investments in infrastructure also help attract new economic development to communities that might otherwise struggle to compete.

Too often in Washington,

infrastructure debates focus on large projects in major metropolitan areas. Those investments matter, but they cannot come at the expense of the small towns and rural communities that make up so much of our country.

Americans who live in smaller communities pay federal taxes just like everyone else. They deserve infrastructure that works just as well.

That is why this legislation is bipartisan. Whether a bridge is in Pennsylvania, Michigan or anywhere else in the country, the need for safe and reliable infrastructure is universal.

My district in Northeastern Pennsylvania is home to many communities that rely on bridges built decades ago. Local officials are doing everything they can to maintain them, but the scale of the challenge often exceeds what small municipalities can manage alone.

The federal government has a responsibility to ensure infrastructure investments reach every corner of the country, not just the largest cities.

Small towns help power America's economy. They grow our food, manufacture essential goods, and sustain industries that keep our nation moving forward. They deserve infrastructure that supports their future.

Safe bridges should not be a privilege for big cities. They should be a promise we keep to every community in America.

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Rep. Rob Bresnahan represents Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District. He's a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where he is vice chair of the subcommittee on Highways and Transit.

America must invest in resilient, enduring infrastructure

By Laura O'Neill Kaumo and Sean O'Neill

Congress is finding itself at a familiar crossroads. Federally funded infrastructure programs face a looming deadline, yet policymakers remain divided on how to sustain the investments needed to maintain and modernize the systems Americans depend on every day — including the concrete infrastructure that forms the backbone of our roads, bridges and built environment.

The paradox is clear: while Washington debates funding mechanisms, the nation's infrastructure continues to age. Roads, bridges, airports, water system, and buildings constructed decades ago now carry traffic volumes and economic demands their designers never imagined. At the same time, rising construction costs, extreme weather and growing freight movement are placing even greater strain on these critical systems.

Recent federal investments have helped move the needle on America's infrastructure condition, improving what had been years of decline. But progress is fragile. Without sustained investment, the country risks sliding backward, squandering both the gains we've made and the taxpayer dollars already committed to rebuilding our foundation. To avoid backslide, Congress needs to approach infrastructure as investment in its future. So, the question before policymakers, therefore, is not simply whether to invest in infrastructure. It is how to invest wisely in systems that will serve Americans for generations.

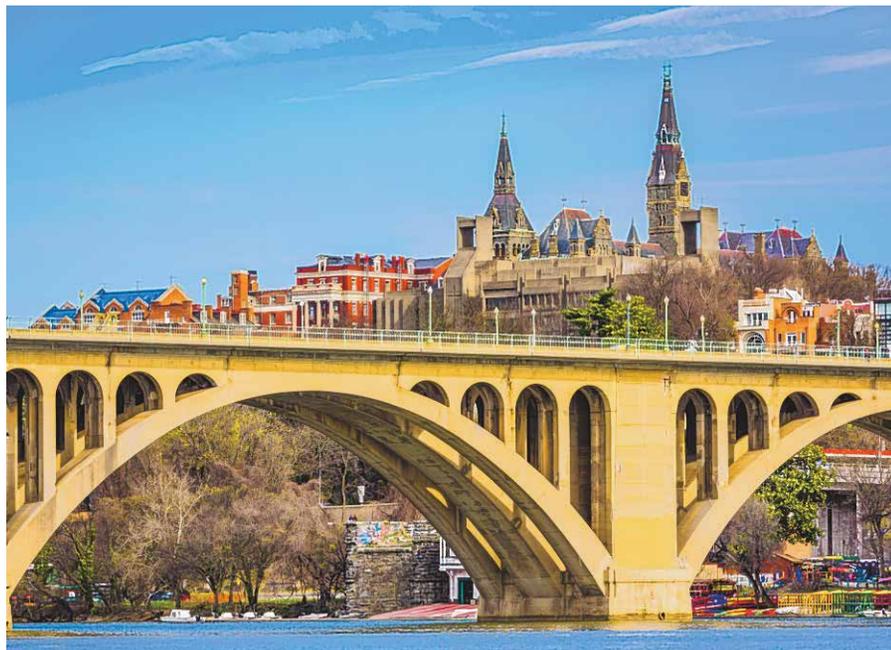
The answer should be clear: the United States must treat infrastructure as a long-term investment and prioritize resilient, long-life construction that is built for the demands of the future, not just the needs of the moment.

Too often, infrastructure debates focus narrowly on initial construction costs. While upfront costs matter, they represent only a fraction of the total expense taxpayers ultimately bear. What truly determines value is how long infrastructure lasts, how often it must be repaired and how reliably it performs under stress from heavy freight traffic to heat waves, floods and winter storms.

Materials matter in this equation — and concrete plays a particularly central role in delivering the durability and resilience modern infrastructure demands. Whether in pavements, bridges, or buildings, concrete structures



Investing in long-life concrete structures today prevents catastrophic costs tomorrow.



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— made with cement — have long demonstrated the durability and resilience necessary to meet these challenges.

In transportation, concrete pavements provide a long service life and consistent performance under heavy traffic loads. They are particularly well-suited for freight corridors, urban arterials, military operations, airports and other high-demand applications where durability and minimal maintenance disruptions are critical. When built with modern design practices and maintained properly, concrete pavements can serve communities for decades while reducing the frequency of costly rehabilitation projects.

The same qualities that make concrete ideal for transportation

infrastructure also make it essential in the built environment. From hospitals and schools to data centers and housing, concrete structures provide strength, fire resistance and durability that communities depend on. Buildings constructed with concrete are better equipped to withstand hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and wildfires, helping protect lives and reduce long-term recovery costs.

Resilience is no longer an abstract policy concept. It is a practical necessity for a nation to confront an aging infrastructure. Communities across the country have seen how quickly roads can deteriorate under heavier freight loads or how buildings can fail when exposed to severe weather conditions.

Investing in long-life concrete structures today prevents catastrophic costs tomorrow.

There is also an important economic dimension to durability. Infrastructure that lasts longer means fewer work zones, less congestion from repeated repairs and more predictable transportation systems for businesses moving goods across the country. It means taxpayers spend less money rebuilding the same infrastructure over and over. And it means public agencies can stretch limited budgets further by focusing on smart lifecycle investments rather than short-term fixes.

Concrete construction also supports a strong domestic manufacturing base. Cement and concrete are produced in communities across the United States, supporting high-quality jobs and local economies while providing the materials needed to build and maintain our nation's infrastructure network.

None of this suggests there is a single solution for every infrastructure project. Engineers and public agencies must continue to evaluate projects using sound data, modern design practices and life-cycle cost analysis. But what the evidence consistently shows is that durable materials, particularly cement and concrete, play a critical role in building infrastructure that performs reliably over time.

As Congress and state leaders consider the next generation of infrastructure investments, the focus should not simply be on building more infrastructure. It should be on building stronger infrastructure projects designed to last longer, withstand greater stresses and deliver better long-term value for taxpayers.

America's infrastructure has always reflected the nation's ambitions. The interstate highway system, major airports, dams and public buildings were not built merely for the needs of the moment; they were designed to serve generations.

Today's infrastructure decisions should follow that same principle. If we want infrastructure that supports economic growth, strengthens communities and stands resilient in the face of future challenges, we must build with durability in mind.

In short, we must build to last, and concrete should be the cornerstone of that effort.

Laura O'Neill Kaumo is president and CEO of the American Concrete Pavement Association. Sean O'Neill is senior vice president of Government Affairs at the American Cement Association.

CEMENT AND CONCRETE

THE FOUNDATION OF SAFE, RESILIENT U.S. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

CEMENT AND CONCRETE ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE U.S. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM. CONCRETE PAVEMENTS OFFER...

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INVEST WISELY

Effective funding decisions build our future. With rising demands and limited resources, selecting proven materials is more critical than ever to ensure safety, longevity and maximum value—and today's concrete construction harnesses data and optimizes asset management to create infrastructure that endures.

SECURE AMERICA'S FUTURE WITH CEMENT AND CONCRETE

Today's policymakers have an opportunity to secure the future of our transportation network by choosing cement and concrete. No other pavement offers the same level of safety, resilience and economy. By investing in concrete, leaders not only advance operational efficiency but ensure taxpayer dollars deliver infrastructure built to last for generations.

MAKE EVERY MILE MATTER: ACT NOW

It's time to lead **boldly** by choosing materials that set the standard for safety and resilience. Make decisions today that invest in proven performance, maximize public safety, and build infrastructure **that stands the test of time.**



Contact ACA
to learn more.



Contact the American
Concrete Pavement
Association to learn more.

Building a VA infrastructure for the next generation of veterans



By U.S. Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill.

Veterans should not have to win the geographic lottery to access the modern health care services they are eligible for through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Ensuring that promise is kept true to the millions of veterans VA serves starts with a rock-solid, modern VA infrastructure in place.

House Republicans and my Committee in Congress are leading a historic reauthorization initiative to reform and improve key aspects of VA's infrastructure to better serve veterans across the United States and its territories. Under current law, VA's construction and leasing process is constrained by inaccurate cost estimates, outdated internal VA workflows and rigid design standards – all of which ultimately slow down needed construction projects. In return, VA's infrastructure procurement system oftentimes fails to meet the needs of veterans nationwide. I want to change that.

This effort will reauthorize and modernize key VA infrastructure authorities, including construction, leasing and facility modernization programs that have not been updated in decades. Modernizing these authorities will not only improve access to internal VA care for the veterans who want it, but it would also ensure taxpayer dollars are spent more efficiently by reducing project delays, redundant approvals and costly bureaucratic bottlenecks.

The bills my House Republican colleagues and I are leading include provisions to reduce the bureaucratic red tape in VA construction projects; propel VA to partner with private companies in communities where we need VA clinics and facilities to speed up the leasing process; require VA to award leases within one year of issuing a solicitation; and mandate updates to VA's outpatient



These reforms are not about replacing VA care. They are about making sure the VA system has the modern facilities it needs to deliver care where veterans actually live today.

clinic design guides every five years to keep the facilities and clinics our veterans are using consistent or better than private-sector standards, among other initiatives. These reforms are not about replacing VA care. They are about making sure the VA system has the modern facilities it needs to deliver care where veterans actually live today.

Our efforts have one goal in mind: pushing VA forward instead of preserving a status quo that no longer serves veterans well.

In parts of the country like my rural district of Southern Illinois – where veterans can't be driving hours to access quality care – or in Florida, North Carolina, and California where we have a large population of veterans, Congress should be able to give veterans nationwide the assurance that they will have access to a good facility, clinic, or medical center that meets their individual healthcare needs. And if we need a new VA facility, it should not take years to get it done – no matter

what the zip code is.

VA's infrastructure and construction procurement system relies on processes that have not been meaningfully modernized in decades. The veteran community has changed a lot over the last 20 years. And as the veteran population shifts and Americans are living longer, VA must have the right facilities in places where veterans and their families live to effectively deliver care and benefits. That means we must reform the way VA's real estate portfolio is set up and make it easier, not harder, for the federal government to get the right facilities, in the right place, at the

right time. That's exactly what House Republicans' bills would do.

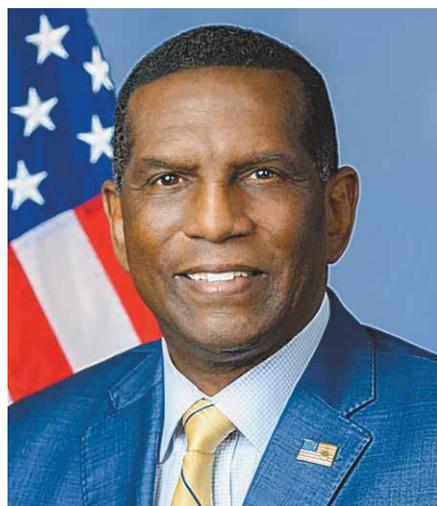
As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, in addition to my role as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have seen firsthand where the improvements need to be made to build up our American infrastructure to ensure that the American taxpayers' multimillion dollar investment is a worthy one. That includes VA, so that the veterans who choose VA care can get it at the best facilities. We have the best of the best working in the trades and construction industry to deliver innovation for America every single day across our great country. It's time to cut out the red tape and let our veterans reap the benefits of that too.

Rep. Mike Bost is a Marine veteran, represents Illinois' 12th congressional district, and serves as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in Congress.



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Hoberman Arch, originally a centerpiece of the Olympic Medals Plaza in Salt Lake City during the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Let's highlight American infrastructure ingenuity at the Olympics



By U.S. Rep. Burgess Owens, R-Utah

In the late spring of 1869, in the high desert northwest of Salt Lake City, a golden spike was driven into the dusty ground at Promontory Summit, completing the first transcontinental railroad. This feat of American grit and determination radically changed our nation. Now, instead of taking weeks or months to transport people, goods or services from one end of the country to the other, it would only take a matter of days. The railroad supercharged our economy and opened markets and communities from sea to shining sea.

That moment transformed Utah from a frontier outpost to the Crossroads of the West. Just 22 years earlier, the first early pioneer settlers entered the Salt Lake Valley after cutting their own trail across the nation in handcarts and wagons. Those early settlers stood up Salt Lake City on its neat grid of streets. And with the arrival of the railroad, it was connected to the rest of the country, and the rest of the world.

Utah did something incredible with the Olympics 24 years ago: it turned a profit.

As the first member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee from my state in over 20 years I've taken our "Utah Way" to Washington and been very glad to see a return to the smart, common-sense projects and policies that deliver real improvements that people can feel every day.

This year, the Surface Transportation bill is being written as America continues to prepare for a World Cup and two Olympic Games over the next decade. This Congress has been laser-focused on ensuring that we use our taxpayer funds wisely. This bill will have an impact on our national infrastructure for decades — which is why the Committee has focused on ensuring that we have a plan that pays for these investments, and a regulatory

environment in places that allows businesses and innovation to flourish.

In 2002 Utah welcomed the world to the greatest snow on earth and kicked off the Winter Olympics, something we will do again in the not-too-distant future. Utah did something incredible with the Olympics 24 years ago: it turned a profit. Almost no Games in the modern age have done that. What was the secret? The LA Times ascribed the profit to a "unique

... partnership between government and a privately run organizing committee."

That is why I'm proud to co-lead the Transportation Assistance for Olympic and World Cup Cities Act with Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-Wash.)

That "unique" partnership is something we hope to foster through our bill. It is an effort to give host cities across America a dependable federal partner while preparing to host major international sporting events like the Olympics and World Cup. Our bill would strengthen transportation planning by providing a standing \$50 million in funds available to help host cities strengthen transportation planning which would boost local collaboration and ensure the United States is ready to shine on the

global stage by providing predictable support, paving the way to gold.

With events that bring the world to the United States of America, the planning needed to be successful starts early. Ensuring that predictable funding source means that local partners can plan on having a dependable federal partner throughout the process and ensure tax dollars are being spent wisely helps host cities and their transit partners plan more effectively.

America is the land where big ideas have always been possible; where the sky ceased to be the limit because we dreamed of reaching out into the stars. We are a nation of builders and winners recapturing the American spirit to do great things.

From freight to families and fans, this bipartisan bill helps our government work for the people by creating long-term and lasting impacts that help improve the infrastructure that we all use and benefit from every single day, removing the uncertainty and innovation-killing red tape.

America is back, America is building, and America is moving again.

Burgess Owens represents Utah's Fourth Congressional District. He serves as a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

A \$600B spark for America's economic engine



By Nile Elam

Looming before Congress is a major domestic policy objective that must pass in just a few months with a number big enough to propel – and sustain – a prosperous future for the United States of America.

With the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) expiring Sept. 30, Congress must act immediately to introduce a successor package. And that package must represent a critical investment: \$600,000,000,000.

That's a lot of zeros. But debating the level of investment is not dependent on party or politics. It's simply what the job calls for at this crucial time.

\$600 billion for roads supports community-focused American companies.

\$600 billion for roads secures quality, local, meaningful American jobs.

\$600 billion for roads provides economic growth across this great country.

\$600 billion for roads improves public safety – for workers, drivers, schoolchildren, and emergency responders.

\$600 billion doesn't just patch roads or expand capacity. It fuels America's economic engine.

The 5-to-1 return on asphalt roads

Federal investment in surface infrastructure provides real-world economic impacts and a positive return on investment.

According to the American Public Works Association, every dollar invested in transportation returns roughly \$5 in economic benefits, and every \$1 billion invested in surface transportation supports about 13,000 jobs. Meeting this moment could support nearly 8 million jobs and generate a \$3 trillion economic boost.

The Congressional Budget Office agrees, boasting that federal infrastructure investment would boost private-sector productivity due to more efficient freight corridors.

Protecting the 70 mph 'office'

This investment also impacts safety – for those inside vehicles and those maintaining our roadways in 'offices' alongside 70 mph traffic.

The American Society of Civil Engineers Infrastructure Report Card last year gave U.S. roads a D+, adding that more than 40% of major U.S. roads are in poor or mediocre condition – shortcomings that cost drivers \$1,400 per year in wasted time and additional operating costs. While that alone is shocking, the potential impact on lives and livelihoods is even more so.

Most of us take for granted the men and women on the other side of orange cones and barrels who work tirelessly to build and maintain our roads.

flexibility to deploy the proven strategies and newest technologies that help protect workers and ensure that road maintenance projects can be implemented efficiently, effectively, and without harm.

Unfortunately, work zone incidents have climbed, spurring a rise in work zone fatalities, according to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse. The upcoming reauthorization must have meaningful impact to mitigate these troubling trends and ensure everyone makes it home safely.

This starts with readily funding and dispersing the Work Zone Safety Contingency Funds we worked so hard to include in IIJA. These funds will better equip state departments of trans-

Meanwhile, states have attempted to fill the void with gas tax increases, vehicle registration fees, bonding and tolling programs and other items to generate revenue for their projects.

But most states cannot carry the costs of maintaining millions of miles of roads, highways and bridges.

While state leadership is commendable, it has led to a fragmented, inequitable national network: one in which quality and safety are overly reliant on a state's fiscal capacity, rather than national continuity. This patchwork approach does substitute for a cohesive federal surface transportation program.

Congress must act now on reauthorization to restore the federal government's proper role as a full partner in building and maintaining a nationally connected roadway system. And Congress must prioritize state formula funding to ensure state agencies are best equipped to maximize federal investment into local projects.

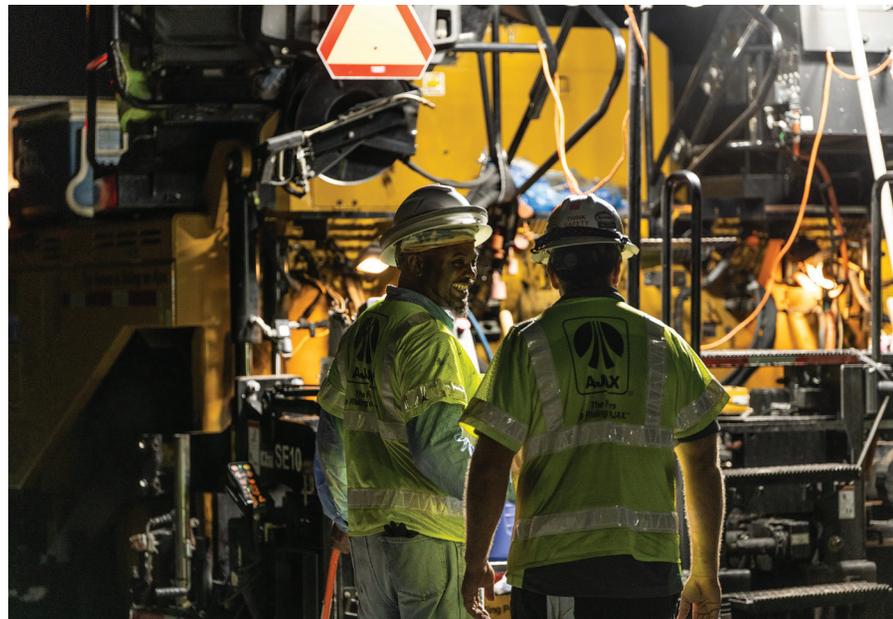
The \$600B package we need now

The House is in the final drafting stages of what should be a traditional surface transportation reauthorization package, focusing on the five key surface programs within the HTF: roads, bridges, highways, rail and transit. Limiting the package to these traditional transportation projects while fully funding it at \$600 billion directly addresses our network's maintenance needs, invests in high-volume and freight corridors and expands roadway capacity where needed.

Major legislative wins last year – including the Big, Beautiful Bill tax reconciliation package and permitting reform packages like the PERMIT & SPEED Acts – help asphalt producers and contractors reinvest in their employees and equipment, following clear and consistent federal and state programs to deliver projects on time and on budget.

But without passing a robust surface transportation reauthorization package this year, we will fall short of leveraging these key legislative wins and maximizing America's full economic potential. NAPA continues to work with Congressional stakeholders on passing this reauthorization package immediately, because we're eager to support the critical work that benefits American companies, workers, drivers, and families.

Nile Elam is vice president for Government Affairs at the National Asphalt Pavement Association, which represents the interests of asphalt mixture producers, contractors, suppliers, and consultants to advance asphalt pavements as an essential part of sustainable transportation infrastructure that paves the way for thriving communities and commerce.



NAPA MEMBER AJAX PAVING INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

NAPA pursues funding flexibility to deploy the proven strategies and newest technologies that help protect workers and ensure that road maintenance projects can be implemented efficiently, effectively, and without harm.

It's no small task for them: navigating machinery, variable environmental conditions and drivers of all skill levels. When those drivers are distracted or feel inconvenienced by road closures or traffic delays, roadworkers bear the risk.

That's why NAPA strongly advocates for work zone safety (WZS) policy and funding as part of reauthorization.

NAPA leads on WZS initiatives, from our annual Watch For Us campaign discouraging distracted driving to free crew safety training to advocating for federal funds for increased job site safety measures.

Put simply, we desire funding

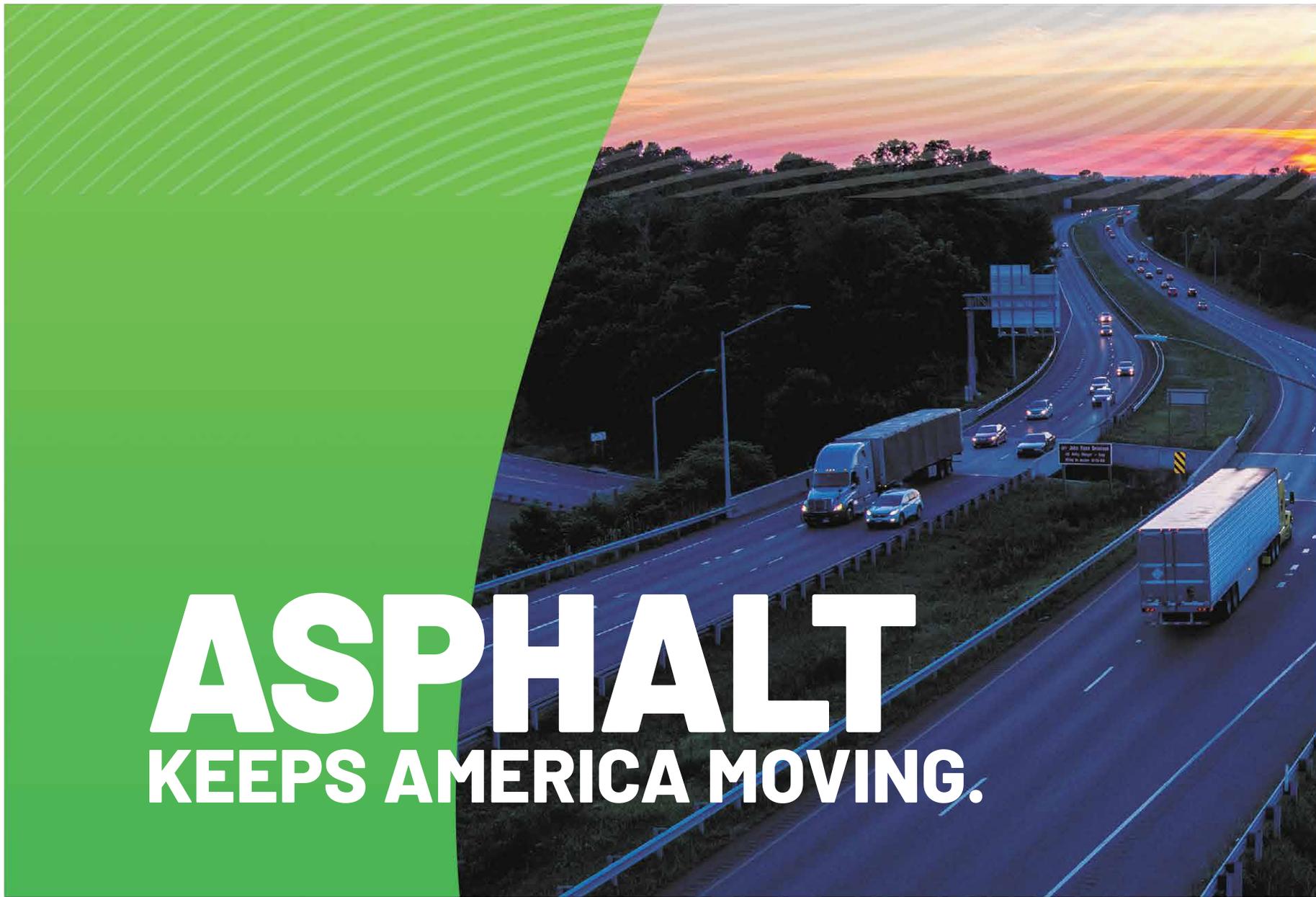
portation to partner with contractors.

Additionally, NAPA is working with Hill offices to introduce a legislative mandate for WZS training for all new drivers.

NAPA is not alone in this push. WZS is endorsed by a coalition of infrastructure trade associations – because the impact is clear to all of us: more safety resources protect lives and encourage better driving habits.

States need federal partnership

Congress has not added any new revenues or user fees into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) since 1993 – a reality that has severely limited the HTF's effectiveness and long-term solvency.



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More than 94% of roads and highways are surfaced with asphalt pavements. The industry provides more than 350,000 men and women with meaningful work. And there's an asphalt mix plant in virtually every Congressional district. We're actively invested in every community, facilitating connection and commerce.

As the industry's national voice, NAPA works with Congress, the Administration, Departments of Transportation, and numerous other stakeholders and partners to engineer smooth, safe, long-lasting roads. Passing a \$600B multi-year surface transportation package this year will ensure the quality and longevity of our roads, support communities across the nation, and strengthen our national economic competitiveness – paving the way for American success.

➤ **Asphalt. America rides on us.**



AsphaltPavement.org

Rural airports are economic lifelines. Washington should treat them that way



By U.S. Rep. Jeff Hurd, R-Colo.

When Washington talks about infrastructure, the conversation usually centers on the biggest cities in the country. The focus is often on congested highways, massive transit systems or large airport expansions in major metropolitan areas.

Those projects matter. But they are not the whole story.

Across rural America, infrastructure looks very different. In many communities, it is a regional airport that connects families, businesses and industries to the rest of the country. It is a runway that allows a small business owner to reach customers across the country in a single day. It is a reliable flight that brings visitors to communities whose local economies depend on tourism and outdoor recreation.

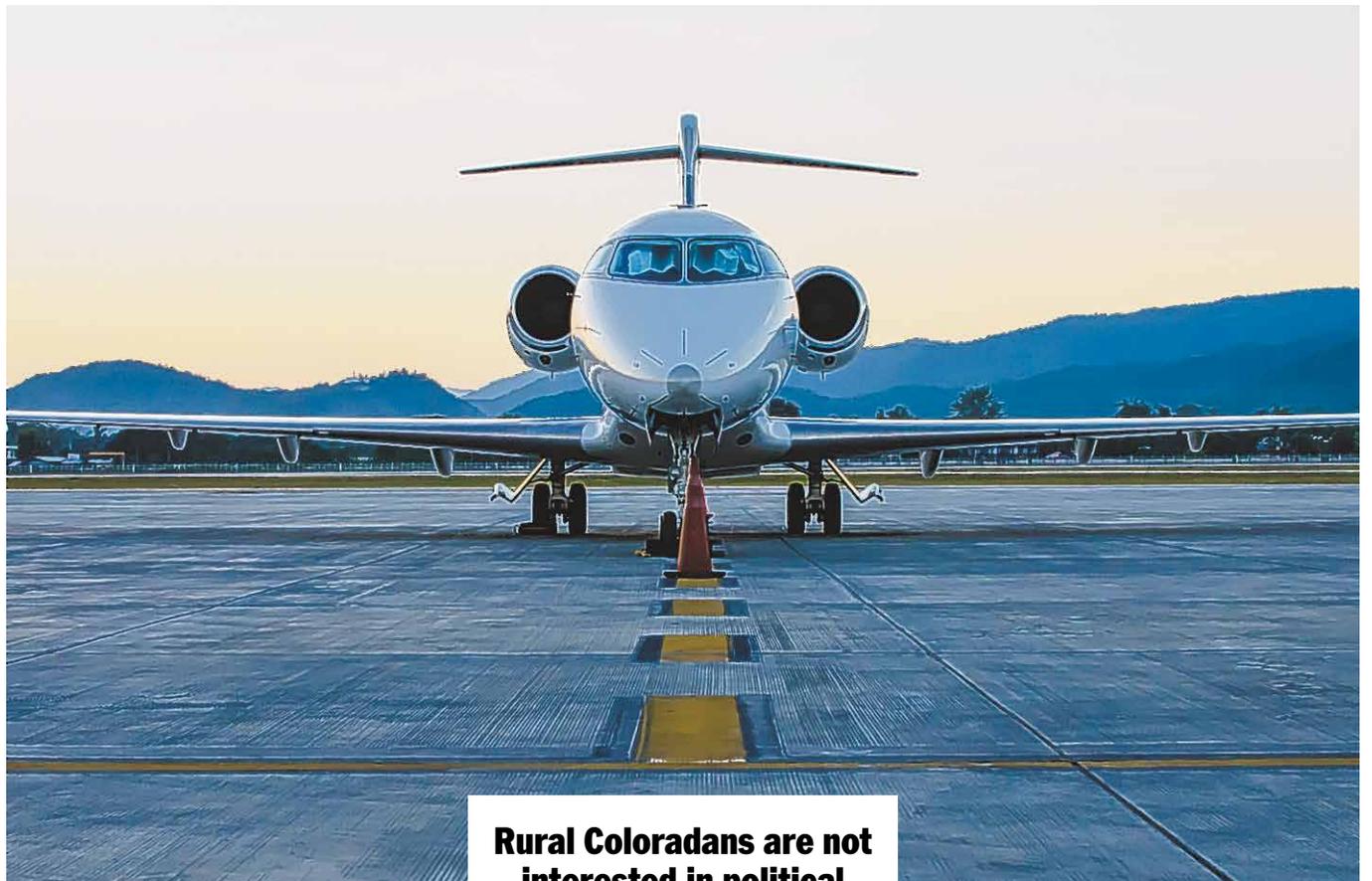
Across Colorado's Third Congressional District, regional airports serve exactly that role.

Airports in Grand Junction, Montrose, Durango, and communities across the Western Slope and southern Colorado connect rural communities to the national economy. They support industries that define our region, including agriculture, energy production, tourism and small businesses that depend on national markets.

They also make everyday life possible in a district where distance is simply part of the geography. For a patient traveling for specialized medical care, a student returning home from college or a business owner meeting with clients across the country, regional airports provide connections that would not exist otherwise.

Maintaining those connections requires modern and reliable infrastructure.

Large airports often have access to multiple financing options and deep capital markets to fund improvements.



Rural Coloradans are not interested in political theater. They care about results. Infrastructure policy should follow that same principle.

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Smaller regional airports frequently do not. Yet the infrastructure they operate is just as essential to the communities they serve.

That is why I introduced the Airport TIFIA Financing Certainty Act.

The legislation addresses a straightforward issue in federal infrastructure policy. The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, known as TIFIA, has long helped finance major transportation projects across the United States. The program provides low-cost federal loans that allow communities to invest in critical infrastructure such as highways, bridges and transit systems.

Those projects have used TIFIA financing successfully for years.

Airports, however, have faced uncertainty about whether they can reliably access the same tool for aviation infrastructure projects. That uncertainty makes long-term planning more difficult and discourages investment in projects that many communities need.

The Airport TIFIA Financing Certainty Act clarifies that airports are eligible and permanently expands access so communities can confidently use TIFIA financing for qualified aviation projects.

Just as important, these are loans rather than grants. They must be repaid. That means projects still need to make financial sense, and taxpayers remain

protected. Communities gain access to flexible financing while maintaining fiscal discipline.

That approach reflects a simple principle. Federal infrastructure policy should help communities build what they actually need, not force them into programs designed primarily around the country's largest cities.

In rural America, infrastructure investments often carry higher stakes.

When a large metropolitan airport expands a terminal, the result may be greater convenience for travelers. When a regional airport upgrades its facilities or expands service, it can unlock entirely new economic opportunities including tourism, business investment and job creation.

Regional airports also play an important role in national supply chains. Agricultural producers rely on them to move goods efficiently. Energy companies depend on them to reach remote project sites. Outdoor recreation economies rely on them to bring visitors to the communities that serve as gateways to America's public lands.

In Colorado's Third District, these

connections are not theoretical. They are part of everyday economic life.

But the same reality exists across rural America. That is why federal infrastructure policy must account for the needs of smaller communities as well as major metropolitan areas.

In Congress, I have focused on practical solutions that make systems work better for the communities I represent. Rural Coloradans are not interested in political theater. They care about results.

Infrastructure policy should follow that same principle.

Programs that reduce uncertainty, expand financing options, and encourage responsible investment can make a real difference even if they do not generate national headlines.

The Airport TIFIA Financing Certainty Act is a targeted reform designed to make an existing tool work better for rural communities.

Sometimes strengthening infrastructure is not about creating a new federal program. Sometimes it is about removing the barriers that prevent communities from building the connections they need to grow and succeed.

Rep. Jeff Hurd represents Colorado's 3rd district, one of the most stunning and diverse regions in the country. He serves on three key House committees: Natural Resources, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Science, Space and Technology.

How Washington turned ‘real’ infrastructure into an ideological wish list of nonsense



By U.S. Rep. Tom Barrett, R-Mich.

For four years under President Joe Biden, Americans were promised a new era of rebuilding our infrastructure — an era of investment in the roads, bridges, water systems and ports that keep our economy moving. But once you look at what Washington actually labels “infrastructure,” the picture becomes much less clear. When everything becomes infrastructure, real infrastructure takes the hit.

Infrastructure used to be an issue that Americans could expect lawmakers in Washington to find common ground and bipartisan solutions. Whether you lived in small-town Byron, Michigan, or downtown Detroit, everyone had similar priorities: maintain safe bridges, repair broken roads, modernize ports and keep supply chains moving. Those goals weren’t partisan — they were practical.

Somewhere along the way, however, the promise of fixing our broken roads and bridges took a back seat to an ideological agenda. When the Biden administration jammed a \$1.2 trillion spending bill through Congress, he told the American people it was for infrastructure. Everyone wants better infrastructure, but the bill focused more on advancing a left-wing wish list and rewarding special interests, rather than rebuilding and strengthening the roads, bridges and other real infrastructure that people deserve.

Rebuilding America’s ports to improve shipping would be a great example of real infrastructure — and one that Biden promised the American people. Unfortunately, most of the \$17 billion allocated for ports was for transitioning away from fossil fuels, rather than improving shipping access. While our government was allocating \$5 billion for electric school buses, \$7.5 billion for



At Port Huron, a cornerstone of American infrastructure, Great Lakes freighters pass beneath the Blue Water Bridge, moving essential goods through a critical international corridor.

electric vehicle charging stations and \$10 billion for carbon capture efforts, our real infrastructure continued to crumble.

The consequences of this reckless approach are real. Look no further than my home state of Michigan, where two-thirds of our bridges have already outlived their originally designed lifespan. Currently, more than 100 bridges are at risk of closing before 2035 and will cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions to repair.

The plywood boards running along the beams above you as you drive under a bridge or overpass are often rather bluntly called diapers. They are there to catch crumbling debris so it doesn’t fall through your windshield as the road surface above you deteriorates. Instead of fixing those bridges, we wasted money trying to electrify buses that can’t even cover a full shift of range

and paying millions per electric vehicle charging station.

For drivers, truckers and small businesses across our state, that’s not an ideological problem. It affects them every day. Poor road conditions cause costly damage to vehicles, and congestion and closures force drivers onto longer routes. In some parts of our state, broken infrastructure costs drivers thousands of dollars per year.

With the \$1.2 trillion price tag on President Biden’s infrastructure plan, we could have repaired every broken bridge in this country several times over or even repaved the entire interstate highway system. Instead, the bill prioritized appealing to climate activists in Washington rather than addressing the deteriorating roads, bridges and other infrastructure needed to keep our economy moving.

I was sent to Congress to fight for the people of mid-Michigan, and that means investing in the real infrastructure our families depend on. I’ve been focused on exactly that — securing resources for infrastructure that gets workers to their jobs, goods to market, and clean water to family homes. This year, I’ve secured more than \$15 million in real infrastructure projects for our region.

That includes funding to repair aging bridges, improve critical roadways, replace broken passenger bridges at the Lansing Airport and provide safe water for our communities. These are practical improvements that will help the people I serve thrive.

When a bridge is repaired, truckers can take the fastest route instead of a costly detour. When roads are improved, commuters spend less time stuck in traffic and less money repairing their vehicles. When transportation

While our government was allocating \$5 billion for electric school buses, \$7.5 billion for electric vehicle charging stations and \$10 billion for carbon capture efforts, our real infrastructure continued to crumble.

hubs are modernized, businesses have greater confidence to invest and grow in our communities.

Washington is finally putting the needs of everyday families before the needs of climate activists. I’ve said many times while meeting with folks across my district — one of the best things about the Trump administration and Republican majorities in Congress is that we no longer need to put the word “real” in front of infrastructure because it’s just implied already.

Americans don’t need Washington to reinvent “infrastructure.” They need Washington to fix it.

Rep. Tom Barrett represents Michigan’s 7th Congressional District. A lifelong Michigander, Tom spent 22 years in the Army flying helicopters and serving deployments around the world before serving in the Michigan Legislature, where he championed veterans, working families, and infrastructure. Now, Tom brings those same values and dedication to Washington — fighting in Congress to ensure that Michigan and the nation remain places where everyone can thrive. He lives in Charlotte with his wife Ashley and their four kids.

Congress must recommit to America's water infrastructure



By David Cole

Spring is here, and with it the familiar rhythms of yard work, ball games and long afternoons spent outdoors. At the end of a hot day, most Americans don't think twice about walking inside and pouring a cold glass of water from the tap. That simple act of trust depends on an enormous network of underground pipes that have served this country for generations, and in some cases, for more than 200 years.

The promise of safe, reliable water is not a luxury; it's a fundamental public health and safety requirement. Unfortunately, much of the infrastructure that delivers that promise has exceeded its service life, and there are too many communities that do not have access to safe and reliable drinking and wastewater systems.

Congress has a great opportunity to safeguard public health and support economic growth by strengthening its long-term commitment to the state revolving funds administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), specifically the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). There are two immediate actions that Congress can take: appropriate \$3.25 billion each for the two SRF programs for FY27; and provide a robust, needs-based reauthorization of both programs. It is critical that Congress act now. As communities across the country are about to experience a water funding cliff this year, as vital supplemental SRF investments are set to expire.

I am encouraged that Congress will address these needs, as water infrastructure investments have strong bipartisan support. 92% of voters identify reliable water access as a very or extremely important issue. In my meetings on the



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The promise of safe, reliable water is not a luxury; it's a fundamental public health and safety requirement.

Hill, water infrastructure investment has strong support from both parties.

Unfortunately, the scale of the challenge is substantial and growing. A recent [report](#) from the Value of Water Campaign estimates the need at a staggering \$3.4 trillion over 20 years to repair and modernize our water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, plus an additional \$4.3 trillion for operations and maintenance. The report also notes that the federal cost-share for water infrastructure has declined from more than half in the 1970s to about 7% today. Without sustained, robust investment, failures will become more frequent and more costly.

The SRF programs are the single largest source of federal funding for water infrastructure in the United States. For the past several fiscal years, the DWSRF has received about \$1.1 billion annually, while the CWSRF has received about \$1.6 billion annually. Congress provided supplemental funding for both programs totaling more than \$50 billion over five fiscal years in 2021. For FY26, Congress provided more than \$7 billion for drinking water and more than \$4 billion for clean water,

bolstered by this supplemental funding. These recent federal investments have made a difference, but they are not enough. They fall far short of the trillions in documented need, underscoring the importance of sustained, reliable funding.

A proven track record

Water infrastructure investment isn't just about public health; it promotes economic resilience. Reliable water systems are foundational to manufacturing, energy production, healthcare and everyday commerce. Investments in water infrastructure generate significant economic returns through job creation, increased productivity, and reduced emergency repairs. The Value of Water Campaign [shows](#) that every \$1 million invested in water infrastructure generates \$2.5 million in economic output, 10+ jobs, \$837,000 in labor income and \$1.4 million in GDP. This means that 2025 funding levels support 2.2 million jobs, \$307.9 billion in GDP and \$588.4 billion in economic output. Additionally, in 2023 DWSRF financing saved communities \$960 million over the life of a 20-year loan compared to higher market

rates. Now is not the time to reduce federal water infrastructure investments and threaten this important sector of the economy.

Investing strategically, not just investing more

For communities across the country, long-term investment is key. One-time investments, while helpful, cannot replace predictable, sustained investment. Utilities and states need long-term certainty to plan and execute large-scale projects efficiently. Passing robust reauthorization of the SRF programs and substantially increasing annual appropriations will allow communities to address challenges proactively rather than react to crises after they occur.

Funding alone is not enough. When communities invest in resilient infrastructure built with proven materials, they reduce future funding pressures and protect ratepayers from the cycle of premature failure and emergency repair that plagues systems built with cheaper materials with a shorter lifespan. Ductile iron pipe is engineered to perform for more than 100 years and is manufactured from a minimum average of 90% recycled material. I am proud that we have 558 water utility members across the U.S. where iron pipe has provided reliable drinking water service for 100-plus years; 29 for 150-plus years; and several cities still use pipes that are 200 years old or more. It's a smart investment that stretches every dollar further throughout the pipe's life cycle.

Congress should also continue its long tradition of material-neutral infrastructure bills and not dictate how communities design their water systems. Local engineers and water professionals should be the ones selecting the materials that will serve their communities for generations – not politicians in Washington. Our water systems are best served when Congress provides sustained, reliable investment and trusts the professionals who know their communities best to use that investment wisely.

The stakes are clear. Safe, reliable water is not optional, and the cost of inaction continues to rise. Congress has a proven investment mechanism in the SRF programs. Now it should fully fund and strengthen them. A sustained national commitment to water infrastructure is not just sound policy; it's a public health and economic imperative, which invests in the infrastructure our children and grandchildren will depend on for generations to come.

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David Cole is president of the Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association (DIPRA).

Congress Must Recommit to America's Drinking Water Infrastructure



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Highway 98 serves as a major thoroughfare for military personnel, residents and vacationers traveling through the Florida Panhandle near Hurlburt Field.

Protect America's 'Warrior Roads'



By U.S. Rep. Jimmy Patronis, R-Fla.

Northwest Florida may be one of America's best-kept secrets.

Every year, visitors arrive by the thousands, drawn by the emerald waters and stunning sunsets along the Gulf of America. But what really defines this region isn't the scenery; it's the people who call it home. This is a community shaped by service.

Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton and Okaloosa counties are home to about 25,000 active-duty service members and nearly 100,000 veterans, not including their families. I'm proud to represent a community that continually puts service before self. I fight for them every day in Washington, because the policies coming out of Washington affect them directly.

For too long, Democrats focused on political games while our veterans were left behind. President Donald Trump took a different approach. His administration made historic investments in veterans by strengthening the Department of Veterans Affairs, expanding access to care, increasing funding for veteran health services and improving accountability for those who failed our warfighters.

As our region grows and America enters a new era of strength and prosperity, we cannot allow outdated infrastructure to hold us back.

I was proud to work with President Trump to pass the One Big Beautiful Bill, which eliminated taxes on tips, overtime and Social Security. That means more money staying in the pockets of hardworking Americans, including many veterans in my district. I've always believed the American people spend their money better than Washington ever could. These policies reflect a simple principle that we must stand behind those who fought for our freedoms, a commitment the Left has too often failed to uphold.

Supporting our troops, however, is about more than pay and benefits. It's about readiness.

Northwest Florida is home to critical installations like Hurlburt Field, headquarters of the 1st Special Operations Wing, which includes 10,000 active-duty airmen, 4,000 civilian contractors and nearly 25,000 family members. From

Hurlburt Field, our airmen stand ready to respond to threats anywhere in the world. At a time when adversaries like Iran are testing America's strength, the men and women serving from Northwest Florida remain on the front lines defending our country.

Despite the critical nature of these missions, access to Hurlburt Field relies heavily on a single route, Highway 98, a vital corridor for service members,

their families and the civilians who live and work in the surrounding community. And that's not the only concern. Eglin Air Force Base also relies heavily on Highway 85, a mostly two-lane road that carries roughly 42,000 vehicles in daily traffic.

Anyone who drives it knows the problem. A single accident can bring traffic to a standstill. With more than half of our service members living off base, congestion isn't just frustrating; it can also slow the movement of personnel and resources essential to national security. During natural disasters, such as a hurricane approaching the Gulf Coast, gridlock could delay emergency response and hinder evacuations. As our region grows and America enters a new era of strength and prosperity, we cannot allow outdated infrastructure to hold us back.

After hearing directly from the men

and women who serve and the families who support them, one thing is clear: our troops and our community deserve better.

That's why I introduced the Warrior Road Act, legislation that prioritizes federal funding for the three most critical infrastructure projects in each state supporting military readiness and public safety. Too often, vital projects compete with lower-priority spending, leaving military communities waiting years for solutions. This bill takes a smarter approach by recognizing that infrastructure isn't just a local issue, but critical to the safety of Americans. When roads, bridges and transportation corridors near military installations fail to keep up with demand, it can slow deployments and weaken preparedness. By prioritizing projects that directly impact Americans' safety, we can ensure taxpayer dollars go where they matter most.

Northwest Florida gives so much to this country. Ensuring the roads that support our service members are reliable and secure is a simple but vital way to return that commitment.

Jimmy Patronis Jr. is the Republican Congressman for Florida's 1st District in the Panhandle. A fourth-generation Floridian and Christian, he is a Trump supporter and advocate for the Second Amendment, veterans, and first responders. He previously served in the Florida House and as Florida's longest-serving Chief Financial Officer, where he managed state finances, cut taxes, opposed ESG investing, supported firefighters and small businesses, defended Israel, and led COVID-19 reopening efforts. He is married to Katie and has two sons and a rescue dog.

To beat China in medicine, America must change how it funds science

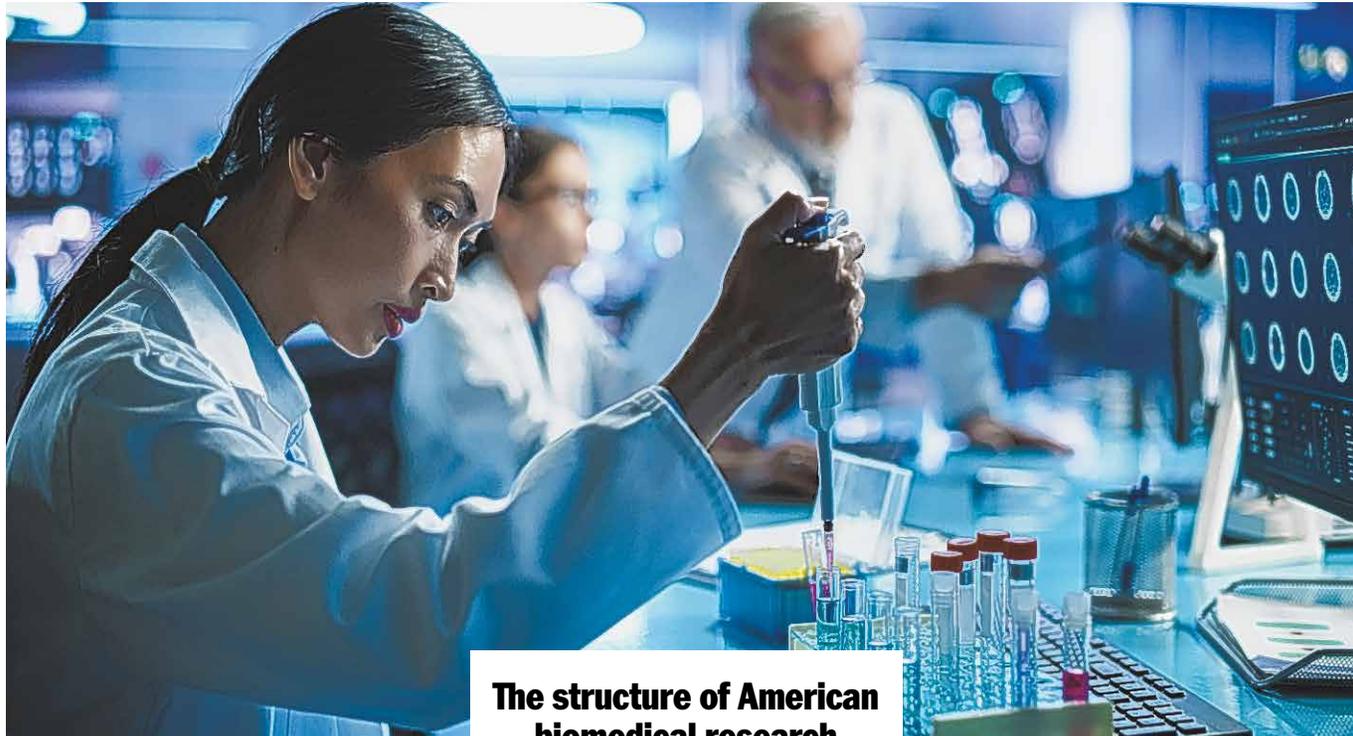


By U.S. Rep. Josh Harder, D-Calif.

In April 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died of a hemorrhagic stroke after years of uncontrolled hypertension, an illness many doctors treated as an inevitable fact of aging. At the time, half of American deaths were from cardiovascular issues. FDR's death galvanized Washington to ask not just how to treat heart disease, but how to prevent it. Congress funded the Framingham Heart Study, which is still ongoing today with its third generation of participants. The Framingham Study revolutionized the modern understanding of heart disease, helping save millions of lives and catalyzing a 70% decline in cardiovascular mortality.

That kind of sustained public investment was the foundation for decades of American biomedical dominance. Funding from the National Institutes of Health underwrote foundational discoveries not only in cardiovascular disease, but in cancer biology, immunology, virology, and more. This work unlocked cholesterol-lowering drugs, targeted cancer therapies, organ transplantation, and modern vaccines. These investments did more than advance science: they reshaped clinical practice, extended life expectancy, and anchored America's leadership in the global life sciences economy.

But that leadership position is now fading. Over the past decade, China has translated scale into genuine leadership in several major areas of health science. Chinese institutions now publish more scientific research papers annually than the United States, and their share of highly-cited medical research has risen rapidly. Chinese scientists are now global leaders in areas like single-cell biology, CRISPR screening, AI-enabled drug discovery, and large-scale population genomics. The difference is not



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ambition or intelligence, it's that China has built a health science system that prioritizes speed and scale while the United States burdens scientists with fragmentation, short funding cycles, and defensive bureaucracy.

American researchers are still largely organized around short-cycle, project-specific grants. The current NIH funding process prioritizes paperwork compliance and short-term accountability, rewarding predictability over boldness and incremental progress over breakthroughs. Never-ending political fights are partly to blame. But over the last year, the challenges mounted as the Trump administration disrupted universities, restricted scientific visas and paused research trials.

We have to fix what the Trump administration broke, but American science lost ground even before President Donald Trump came into office. We must think more seriously about reform and how to get better value and more innovation regardless of overall funding levels. One useful example comes from funding models that have been proven successful by philanthropic donors. Research organizations like the Arc Institute and Howard Hughes Medical Institute fund investigators with long horizons and flexible budgets and often require collaboration when it makes scientific sense.

Both Arc and HHMI fund people, not projects. They pick extraordinary scientists, support them for seven to ten years, and allow research agendas to evolve as results emerge rather than

The structure of American biomedical research determines how quickly new treatments reach patients, how prepared our country is for the next pandemic, and whether the United States remains the place where the most ambitious ideas in medicine are pursued, rather than postponed.

locking investigators into fixed-grant deliverables. This structure mirrors how scientific breakthroughs actually occur, and decades of retrospective analysis show that investigator-centered funding produces a disproportionate share of highly cited work and transformative discoveries.

Reform will strengthen public accountability by measuring long-term scientific progress rather than short-term grant compliance. The NIH needs a new grant mechanism to bring these private sector successes in-house to fund projects with longer horizons, fewer interim milestones, greater budget flexibility, and evaluation based on scientific trajectories rather than narrowly defined project outcomes.

Unlike so many other fights over science right now, this is a bipartisan effort. A new bill I co-authored with Rep. Jay Obernolte, R-Calif., would allow the NIH to fund high-risk, high-reward scientific exploration, and the

National Science Foundation has already begun moving in the same direction. Just last week, NIH Director Dr. Jay Bhattacharya voiced new support for establishing this kind of initiative. This should be just the beginning of rethinking how to put innovative, high-return science at the center of the NIH.

This is not an abstract competition among scientists or a zero-sum race for prestige. The structure of American biomedical research determines how quickly new treatments reach patients, how prepared our country is for the next pandemic, and whether the United States remains the place where the most ambitious ideas in medicine are pursued rather than postponed.

America built our postwar leadership by recognizing that discovery under uncertainty requires trust in people, long horizons, and tolerance for failure. The Framingham Heart Study was not safe or incremental; it was a bet that knowledge could change the course of heart disease. If the United States wants to remain a biomedical superpower, we cannot rely on past institutions running on outdated incentives. Reforming how American science funds discovery is not about spending more. It's about deciding whether America still intends to lead.

Rep. Josh Harder represents California's 9th Congressional District. He's a member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, where he serves on the subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

Three steps we can take to solve California's water crisis



By U.S. Rep. Vince Fong, R-Calif.

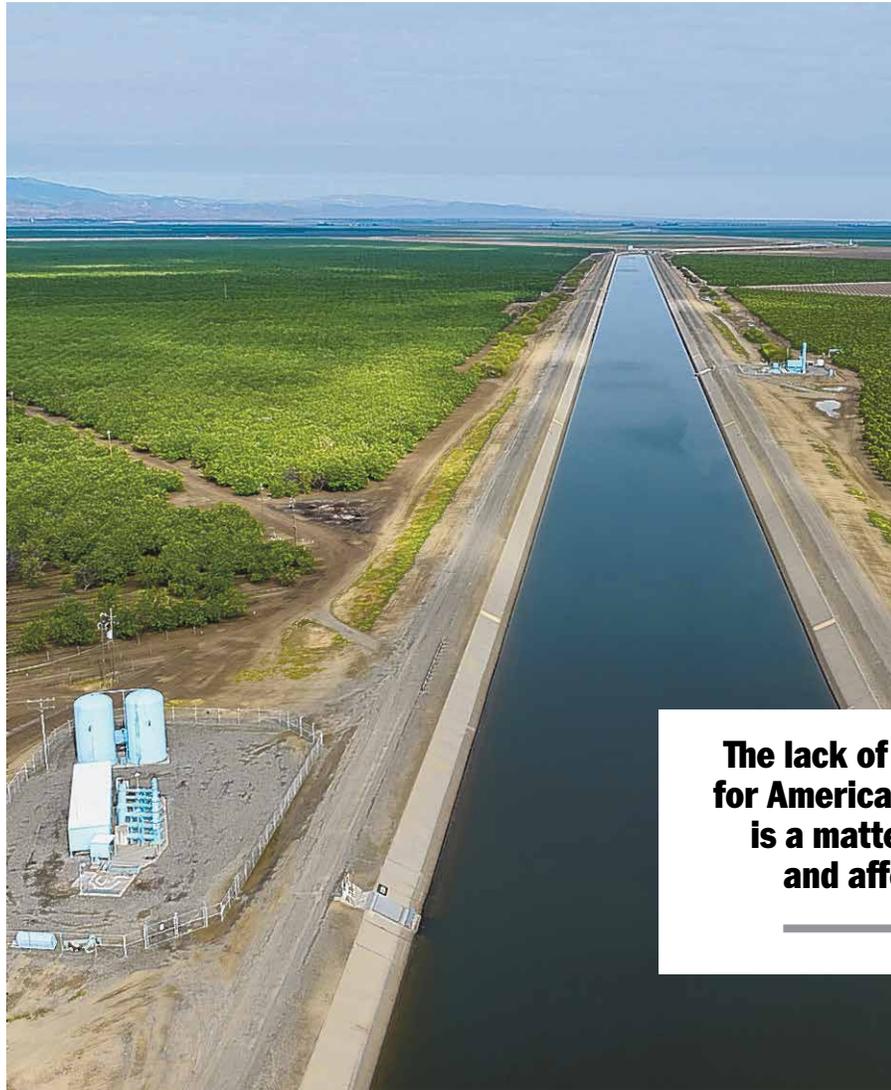
Water is life. It's a simple saying that holds profound meaning, especially in California's Central Valley. Unfortunately, the Golden State has pursued policies that limit the construction of new reservoirs and prioritize wasteful water flows that are exacerbated by our boom-and-bust cycle of water availability.

The consequences of this crisis are severe. Entire communities in the Central Valley are sinking due to subsidence — some by nearly 12 feet. Farmers are forced to ration the limited water resources they receive, threatening agricultural productivity in a region that grows nearly three-quarters of the nation's fresh fruits and nuts and half of the nation's vegetables. Families in more urban areas face rising costs and increasing regulations to conserve water. To make matters worse, the barrage of severe wildfires over the past decade has damaged tributaries, contaminating water sources and harming critical infrastructure.

But this isn't just a California problem. The lack of reliable water resources for America's food production capital is a matter of economic security and affects every American.

Solving this crisis won't be easy, but there are three essential steps we must take to move in the right direction. First, we must build more water storage and conveyance infrastructure. Second, we must adopt modern management tools and scientific practices to better manage water supplies. Finally, we must reform our environmental management strategy to balance ecosystem protection with ensuring water availability for our communities.

Stable water supplies are vital for our economic well-being and our national food supply. California's boom-and-bust



View of the California Aqueduct delivering vital water supplies across the Central Valley, sustaining one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions.

The lack of reliable water resources for America's food production capital is a matter of economic security and affects every American.

water cycles make storage even more imperative. The state's 2022 water year was characterized by extreme drought following the driest three-year period on record. In contrast, 2023 was considered a "miracle" year, with 31 atmospheric rivers driving record-breaking precipitation, snowpack reaching 237% of average, and reservoirs filling to 128% of their historical average. The result was extreme flooding and the reemergence of Tulare Lake, which had been largely drained since 1900.

This is why my California colleagues and I fought so hard to secure \$1 billion for water infrastructure in the western U.S. This funding will help ensure water can be delivered efficiently to communities and farms in the Central Valley and Southern California. Within three conveyance canals alone - the Friant-Kern Canal, Delta-Mendota Canal, and the San Luis Unit of the California Aqueduct - there are more than \$1 billion in projects

that could break ground within the year.

We must equip our communities with the tools they need to safeguard their water supply for decades to come. One way to do this is by updating the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) to allow eligibility for cutting-edge technologies such as advanced monitoring software, leak detection tools, and real-time data dashboards. I have introduced legislation to do just that — bringing municipal water infrastructure into the 21st century with innovative technologies that help communities track and manage water systems more effectively, conserve water, improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Other technologies can also help us better manage and protect this precious resource, including Airborne Snow Observatory flights (ASO) and Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO). Both tools allow for more precise water management at surface storage

reservoirs, ensuring more water can be safely stored for longer periods rather than preemptively released into the ocean. These technologies will also help water managers make more informed allocation decisions. For agricultural producers who rely on allocation announcements to determine when to plant crops in the spring, this information is essential for lowering risk.

Above all, we must reform rigid regulations and reduce excessive litigation that have forced water managers to abandon practices that once balanced municipal, agricultural, and fishery needs. Just last month, because salinity levels in the Delta were deemed too high by outdated regulations, water managers were forced to flush 600,000 acre-feet of water into the ocean. For perspective, that volume could have supplied the water needs of 1.2 million households for an entire year.

This is an issue that has united members of California's congressional delegation from both parties: federal and state water managers must be able to manage water collaboratively and innovatively without being constrained by decades-old regulations. Lawmakers need to make the conscious decision to promote responsible stewardship of our natural resources without sacrificing the industries that power our regional economy.

To put it plainly, we lack the infrastructure needed to store and the ability to move this precious resource effectively, constrained by outdated regulations that do not deliver meaningful benefits for neither people nor ecosystems.

The result couldn't be clearer: Californians are struggling to pay their water bills and farmers are struggling to grow our nation's food. The Golden State must set aside partisan divides and work with those in Congress toward real solutions to our water crisis.

It is time for California's water management practices to enter the 21st century and focus on delivering water to the people who need it most.

Rep. Vince Fong represents California's 20th Congressional District. He is a member of the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure; Science, Space and Technology; and Homeland Security.

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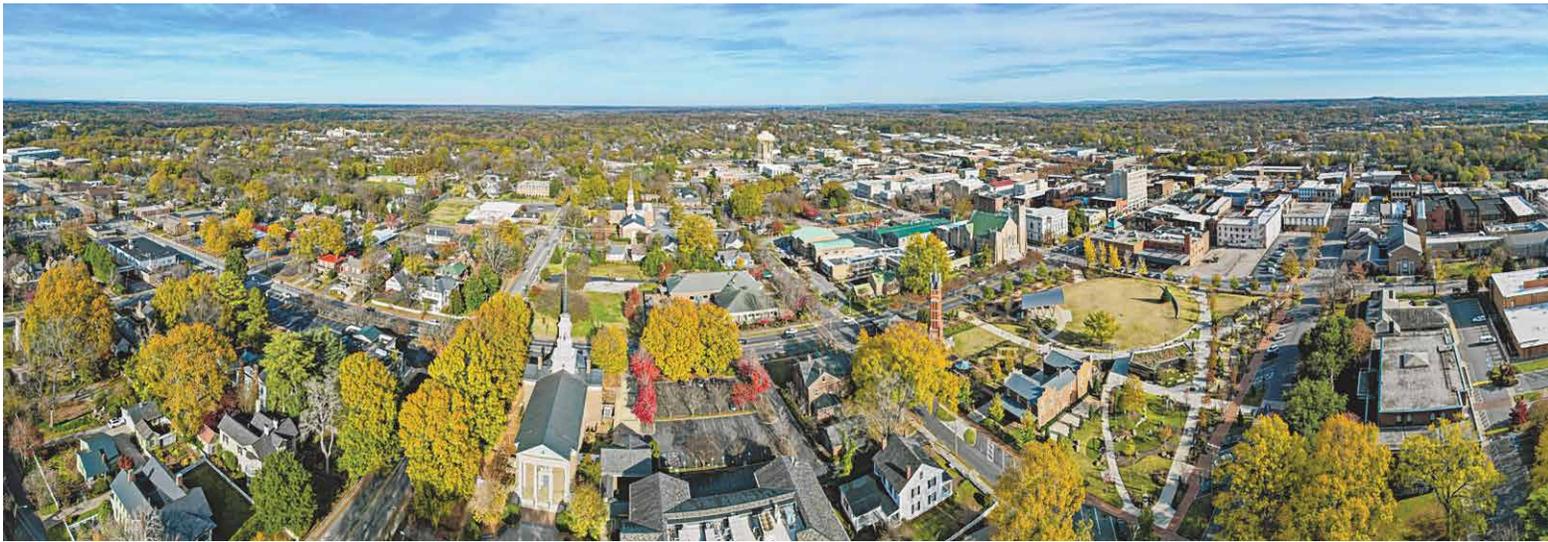
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Salisbury, NC from above, showcasing the city's transportation and infrastructure network.

Meeting the moment: North Carolina's race to keep up with growth



By U.S. Rep. Addison McDowell, R-N.C.

To understand why businesses are choosing North Carolina, start in the 6th Congressional District.

From here, you're about two hours from the Blue Ridge Mountains and three hours from the beaches on the Atlantic coast. The Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina is a great place to raise a family and build a business — and it's only a bonus that we have the best barbecue in the state, and therefore the country.

Major interstate corridors run through the heart of our region. Rail lines connect manufacturers to ports and distribution hubs across the East Coast. Within a day's drive, businesses can reach more than half the U.S. population.

Top-notch infrastructure is not an accident. In partnership with the federal government, the state can invest in highways, rail corridors and freight

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infrastructure that allow goods to move quickly and efficiently.

North Carolina manages the second-largest state-maintained road system in the nation, with more than 80,000 miles of state highways, roughly 13,800 bridges and more than 3,300 miles of rail corridors. This infrastructure is a key factor companies consider when they choose to invest in my home district — and those investments are not slowing down.

In Cabarrus County, Red Bull is building a 2.3-million-square-foot manufacturing and distribution campus. When fully operational, the facility will produce three billion cans annually, all of which will need to be distributed efficiently. That level of production is only possible because the infrastructure exists to move products quickly and reliably.

SBA Home is investing \$70 million redeveloping a 500,000-square-foot facility into a furniture manufacturing plant producing ready-to-assemble furniture for companies such as IKEA. SBA Home expects to produce and distribute two million pieces of furniture annually out of their Davie County facility by 2028, all of which will rely on strong infrastructure to reach customers across the country.

John Deere in Forsyth County is expanding its manufacturing with a new excavator factory, part of their long-term

commitment to invest billions in U.S. production. Nearby, logistics company XPO has opened its largest service center in the country, a 265,000-square-foot facility on 70 acres that serves as a critical hub for freight.

These investments make up billions of dollars flowing into our communities, and they demand infrastructure capable of supporting them. Factories must connect to freight corridors. Distribution centers depend on reliable highways. And the supply chains powering American manufacturing rely on safe rail, efficient roads and transportation systems that move goods without delay.

Economic growth at this scale relies on infrastructure that can keep up and meet the moment.

Congress has a job to do. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, these are exactly the kinds of challenges I look forward to addressing as we prepare the next surface transportation bill.

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In 2024, Hurricane Helene swept

across western North Carolina, destroying more than 1,500 roads, damaging countless bridges, flooding entire communities and overwhelming water systems throughout the region. In total, damages are estimated to reach nearly \$60 billion.

While many in Washington look at this from a 30-thousand-foot view, North Carolinians know rebuilding a road, erecting a bridge, and ensuring communities have reliable water infrastructure is about much more than a price tag. It means families can actually begin to rebuild their lives, remain where their families have lived for decades and restore the businesses that are the cornerstone of the community.

The last surface transportation bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), was weighed down with politically motivated environmental programs that ultimately strayed from the Department of Transportation's core mission. A new surface transportation bill will be an opportunity for Congress to rectify the failures of the IIJA and double down on the process that we know works.

As we strengthen and rebuild our state to be stronger, we must keep in mind the transportation needs that lie ahead.

Companies from around the world are looking at North Carolina and making long-term bets on our state. It is our job as North Carolinians to keep the momentum moving forward and meet the moment because if we do, we can lead the nation in manufacturing, logistics and economic opportunity for decades to come.

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Addison McDowell represents North Carolina's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives and is a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.



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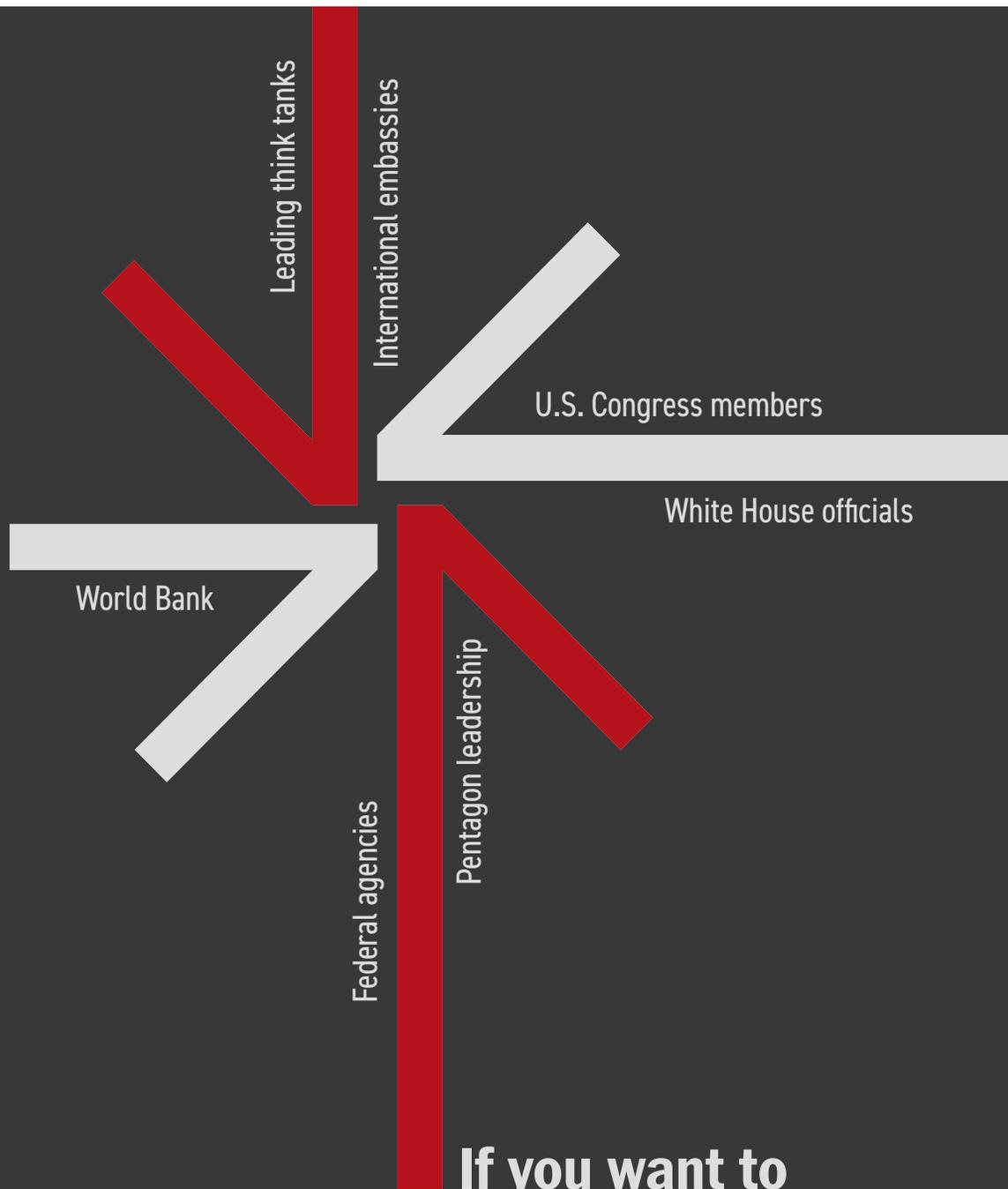
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