

# ROADMAP TO

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# MODERNIZING AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

For almost 100 years, America's infrastructure has been the envy of the world. But over more recent decades, total investment in transportation has fallen as a share of gross domestic product while population, congestion, and maintenance backlogs have increased. America's infrastructure is in terrible condition. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has given our infrastructure the miserable grade of D+.

Inaction is simply not an option. We need to modernize America's infrastructure immediately. The time to act is now.



**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

## SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

To rebuild and expand our roads, bridges, and transit systems, it is time for a modest increase in the federal motor vehicle user fee. The user fee was last raised in 1993. Since then, inflation has eroded nearly 40% of its value. In addition, vehicles are significantly more fuel efficient than they were 25 years ago. As a result, motorists spend less on fuel to drive the same number of miles, but there is significantly less revenue to maintain the roads they drive on.

Because of Washington's failure to adjust the user fee, the Highway Trust Fund faces a shortfall of \$138 billion over the next decade. And that is just to continue today's insufficient levels of investment. Absent a long-term dedicated funding stream, the federal government does not have the resources to maintain or expand these core transportation infrastructure systems.

Since 1993, 39 states have raised their own state motor vehicle fuel user fees. It is past time for the federal government to do the same.

Specifically, we call on Congress to raise the user fee by 5 cents per year for five years for a total of 25 cents and adjust the fee to inflation thereafter.



## CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Rebuilding and modernizing our airports, ports, waterways, water systems, dams, rail systems, utilities, and other core infrastructure require a multifaceted financial approach that includes leveraging private-sector resources. We can meet today's infrastructure needs and build for the future by financing the costs over the long term.

Specifically, Congress should:

- Expand and improve existing federal loan programs covering transportation, water, and rail.
- Create a new loan program to finance a broad array of infrastructure projects with loans to be repaid through dedicated public or private funding streams.
- Remove statutory and regulatory barriers to public-private partnerships.
- Create a new discretionary grant program to stimulate competition and leverage state, local, and private-sector funds for projects of national significance.
- Expand private activity bonds.

A small federal investment now would leverage significant additional funding for infrastructure projects. This would allow the nation to embark on the rebuilding that we need without breaking the bank.





## **THE WORKFORCE NECESSARY TO REBUILD OUR INFRASTRUCTURE**

Rebuilding America's infrastructure will require skilled workers ready and able to take on new projects. Yet today—before any major new investment in our infrastructure—78% of construction firms report that they are having a hard time finding qualified workers. If we do not expand the workforce, it will be impossible to move ahead with the projects that need to be undertaken.

Congress and the administration must take key steps to address the worker shortage. To increase the number of skilled workers, policymakers should expand apprenticeship programs and the network of sector-based construction partnerships under federal workforce programs. They should also reform and increase support for federal career and technical education programs.

We need to keep the skilled workers who are currently in the workforce because of programs like DACA and TPS. Ultimately, Congress must enact immigration reform so that we can attract and admit the skilled workers our nation needs.

## **PERMIT STREAMLINING**

The permitting process for major infrastructure projects is broken. It can take longer to get government permits than it takes to construct a project. It takes on average five years to complete an environmental impact statement, a federal requirement for many large projects. And depending on the type of project, permitting can involve state and local approvals in addition to myriad federal permits.

Congress and the administration in recent years have taken steps to improve the federal permitting process, but more must be done. It should never take more than two years to complete all federal permits required for an infrastructure project. Further, projects that benefit from federal funding or financing should be subject to a similar requirement with respect to state and local permits: The process should never take more than two years and should run concurrently with the federal permitting process.

In addition to setting firm deadlines, it is time for Congress to merge sequential and duplicative reviews, codify the "One Federal Decision" policy so that there is a single agency responsible for shepherding a project through the approval process, and ensure that post-approval lawsuits do not needlessly delay projects.



## INFRASTRUCTURE FAST FACTS

**D+** is the current score of the condition of America's infrastructure.

—American Society of Civil Engineers *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*

**\$3.7 trillion** is the amount needed by 2025 to get America's infrastructure to a B.

—American Society of Civil Engineers *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*

**\$1.7 trillion** is the gap between existing spending and \$3.7 trillion.

—American Society of Civil Engineers *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*

**\$516** is the annual average cost to a motorist driving on bad roads.

—TRIP: *Bumpy Roads Ahead*

**35 minutes** is the increase in the average weekly time spent commuting since 1990.

—Census Bureau Data

**6 billion** gallons of treated drinking water are lost every day due to an aged system.

—American Society of Civil Engineers *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*

**15,498** dams have been identified as having high hazard potential.

—American Society of Civil Engineers *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*

**49%** of vessels experience delays across the inland waterway system.

—American Society of Civil Engineers *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*

**72%** of voters say the U.S. government should invest more in transportation infrastructure.

—U.S. Chamber Morning Consult poll



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Tell your member of Congress—now is the time to modernize America's infrastructure.  
Visit [LetsRebuildAmerica.com](https://www.LetsRebuildAmerica.com) to learn more.

**#RebuildNow**