

Principles for Infrastructure Investment

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) welcomes the opportunity to work with President-elect Trump, his administration, and the 115th Congress to develop a workable plan to repair and modernize our nation's infrastructure and foster economic growth. If appropriately applied to those infrastructure areas in most need of federal support, a \$1 trillion investment represents a significant step toward achieving an American infrastructure system fit for the 21st century.

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ASCE has long been an advocate for improving and maintaining the nation's infrastructure. The last ASCE *Report Card for America's Infrastructure*, issued in 2013, rated the overall condition of the nation's infrastructure a cumulative grade of "D+," with an investment gap of \$1.6 trillion. [An economic study](#) we released in 2016 found that the U.S. is on track to invest only half of what is needed in infrastructure over the next decade. This underinvestment will cause our infrastructure to further degrade, resulting in a loss of 2.5 million jobs and \$3.9 trillion in GDP by 2025. And it will cost American families \$3,400 a year – \$9 a day. President-elect Trump's proposed \$1 trillion investment would help close this investment gap.

Historically, our nation invested in infrastructure projects with long-term benefits, such as the Hoover Dam and Interstate Highway System, that strengthened the economy while the project was being designed and built, and for generations to come. ASCE has sought to raise awareness of the United States' pressing infrastructure challenges, and some incremental progress has been made since ASCE released its first Infrastructure Report Card in 1998.

These past successes tell us that the next major investment in American infrastructure will require bold vision coupled with thoughtful planning. If we are to achieve lasting progress for our infrastructure, the federal government must commit to not only financing infrastructure programs but funding them, and this funding must supplement – rather than replace – long-term solutions, regular appropriations, and scheduled reauthorizations. Further, all levels of government and the private sector must share in this investment if we are to restore America's world-class infrastructure.

Fundamental Criteria for Future Infrastructure Investment

ASCE believes that all infrastructure programs and projects supported by infrastructure investment legislation must meet the following fundamental criteria:

- Investments must provide substantial, long-term benefits to the public and the economy;
- The cost of a project over its entire life span – including designing, building, operating, and maintaining the infrastructure – must be taken into account;
- Projects should be built sustainably and resiliently; and
- Federal investment should leverage state, local, and private investment, not replace these other critical sources of infrastructure funding.

A Starting Point for Federal Infrastructure Investment

ASCE urges President-elect Trump and the 115th Congress to focus first on prioritizing those aspects of our infrastructure most in need of repair, replacement, and modernization, to sustain our economy, public health, and safety.

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As a first step, ASCE recommends President-elect Trump request full or increased funding for existing federal infrastructure programs, such as:

- The Clean Water State Revolving Fund,
- The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund,
- The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Program,
- The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields and Superfund cleanup programs,
- The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) NextGen air traffic control system,
- The FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP),
- The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund,
- The Inland Waterway Trust Fund,
- The Dam Safety Program,
- The Levee Safety Program,
- Priority projects in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project backlog,
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grants, and
- U.S. DOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grants.

The projects funded by these programs have already proven to be successful; providing more funding to existing programs rather than creating new programs will reduce overhead costs and startup time while still allowing for significant and noticeable improvements across all sectors of U.S. infrastructure.

Further, a critical component of any plan to rebuild and modernize our infrastructure must be to fix the Highway Trust Fund. Our nation's surface transportation infrastructure accounts for more than three-quarters of the infrastructure investment gap, and bolstering the Trust Fund would go a long way toward closing the gap. The Fund's primary revenue source, the federal motor fuel tax, has not been raised since 1993 and inflation has cut its real value by 40%. Congress has shored up the fund with \$140 billion in general fund transfers since 2008. To ensure adequate and stable funding for America's highways, bridges and transit systems the Trust Fund needs a long-term, sustainable revenue source.

Infrastructure is the very backbone of our nation's economy. ASCE and its 150,000 members look forward to working with President-elect Trump and the 115th Congress to improve America's infrastructure, so that every family, community, and business can thrive.