

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEIL L. BRADLEY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT &
CHIEF POLICY OFFICER

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June 29, 2020

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has long viewed building modern infrastructure as critical to America's economic growth, expanded global competitiveness and improved quality of life. For several years we have partnered with Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate in constructive efforts to develop meaningful, durable legislation that could win the type of strong bipartisan support that has been the hallmark of previous infrastructure efforts. Rather than pursuing a bipartisan bill, the House is preparing to take a partisan vote on H.R. 2, the "Moving America Forward Act," which would move further away from real and meaningful investments in our failing infrastructure. The Chamber does not support this legislation.

With historic unemployment and tremendous unmet infrastructure needs, now is clearly a time for bold and ambitious action. There is nothing bold, however, about voting on a bill that does not and will not have the bipartisan support needed to become law.

There is a better path. Many of the proposals contained within H.R. 2 enjoy bipartisan support and are priorities of the business community and other key national stakeholders. Other congressional committees have demonstrated that bipartisan consensus is possible on surface transportation reauthorization. Yet, rather than building on those areas of agreement, the current approach appears to be subtraction through addition – adding proposals beyond core surface and water infrastructure programs on which there is not agreement in order to ensure that the overall bill is as partisan as possible. This outcome is not progress.

We normally do not suggest how Congress should consider legislation, but in this instance the stakes are too high for yet another failure. Therefore, we urge you to bring up for consideration the bipartisan bill reported in the Senate and consider any infrastructure related amendments that have the support of at least 20 Republicans and 20 Democrats – a rules change first put forward by the Problem Solvers Caucus. Such an approach would be the most likely to result in passage of a bipartisan bill that would have a chance of becoming law.

Furthermore, Congress should not continue to punt decisions about how to pay for investments in infrastructure. Dedicated revenues no longer support even current levels of spending, let alone the levels of investment America's infrastructure so desperately need. The Chamber has long called for paying for increased infrastructure spending. In addition to putting specific proposals, such as a modest increase in the fuel user fee, on the table, we remain willing to work with all stakeholders on other reasonable approaches that can become law.

The Chamber is prepared to key vote and offer every measure of support for any effort designed to actually get a fiscally responsible infrastructure package enacted into law. H.R. 2 and the current process is not such an effort.

If House leadership of both parties commit to building on areas of consensus, the Chamber stands ready to partner with you in moving as many of those proposals forward as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil L. Bradley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Neil L. Bradley