

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEIL L. BRADLEY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT &
CHIEF POLICY OFFICER

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June 8, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
And Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
And Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

As you prepare to consider H.R. 3864, the “Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) In America Act,” the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reiterates our call for comprehensive, bipartisan legislation to address America’s urgent infrastructure needs. Given the broad bipartisan support for reauthorization of surface transportation programs, as evidenced by recent action in the Senate and a variety of bills introduced in the House, it is clear the INVEST in America Act can provide the foundation for the durable, comprehensive legislation needed.

Reauthorizing the core surface transportation programs prior to their September 30, 2021, expiration would provide the certainty of federal commitment needed to allow state, local, and private partners to move forward with needed planning and construction of modern, resilient surface transportation. The record amounts of authorized investments in the bill would benefit rural, suburban, and urban regions.

We are pleased the bill would address some climate-related issues with an emphasis on resilience and by encouraging private sector innovation to build more durable infrastructure. The Chamber also supports the inclusion of a new National Surface Transportation Funding Pilot to facilitate a potential move to funding mechanisms that ensures all system users— regardless of how vehicles are powered – are contributing to the building and maintenance of the surface transportation network, a concept the Chamber supports.

As the Committee marks up the bill, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Support an amendment to ensure improved project delivery by codifying the “one federal decision” doctrine;
2. Remove the provision in Section 1201 that would limit the ability of state departments of transportations to expand the current highway network;
3. Remove provisions that could re-regulate the private operations of the freight rail sector; and,
4. Remove provisions that impose unnecessary barriers on the deployment of innovative technologies, such as automated vehicles.

The Chamber strongly encourages bipartisan efforts in the House and Senate to enact infrastructure legislation in the near term, and launched an effort early this year with more than 320 organizations, including businesses, labor organizations and environmental groups, calling on Congress to pass comprehensive infrastructure legislation by July 4th, 2021. Such a unified message should provide critical momentum to pass a historic infrastructure bill that the country sorely needs.

We believe the Committee can work together to address what all agree is critical to America's future economic success and quality of life. Durable, bipartisan solutions provide the best path to gain enactment of a long-term vision and investment to modernize our surface transportation systems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil L. Bradley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil L. Bradley

cc: Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure