

Infrastructure Month Tool Kit Talking Points

- A world class public infrastructure system is vital to U.S. competitiveness and economic strength.
- It facilitates trade and commerce, it drives travel and tourism, it enables personal mobility—and it spurs economic growth and productivity.
- Even though we still have one of the best systems in the world, American infrastructure is rapidly falling into disrepair. Anyone who's ridden over a pothole, gotten stuck in traffic, or waited for a delayed airline flight knows that.
- In fact, U.S. civil engineers give our infrastructure a D grade. That's not good enough.
- Our nation needs to better maintain its investment in the physical platform of our economy.
- For starters, taxpayers have to know their money is being spent wisely and on worthy projects.
- We need to build on the reforms of MAP-21, the 2012 highway-transit-safety law.

- The law reformed infrastructure spending, creating more transparency and accountability in order to prevent waste and inefficiency.
- But reform isn't enough. Without continued and increased investments in maintenance, updates, and expansion, our roads and waterways, pipes and transit systems, will crumble—posing a threat to public safety and smooth flowing commerce.
- Both the public and private sectors play important roles in preserving and modernizing our infrastructure.
- For its part, Congress has two major legislative priorities that it should address this fall.
- Lawmakers must pass, and the President should sign, a **Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA** [“whirr-duh”].
- WRDA outlines the way the Army Corps of Engineers manages the locks, dams, levees, and channels that make transportation by ship possible along our rivers and coasts, and in and out of inland ports and seaports.

- It also protects land and development from flooding and promotes projects that improve hydropower, water supply, ecosystem restoration, and recreational opportunities.
- It's been nearly six years since the previous WRDA passed in 2007.
- As a result, the Corps has been chronically underfunded and system maintenance has fallen behind.
- Critical new projects can't get started and those projects that do receive funds move slowly as resources are stretched to meet multiple priorities.
- Congress must also prevent federal highway, transit, and safety investments from being wiped out in the fall of 2014.
- The Highway Trust Fund is going broke because taxes haven't been increased, people are driving fewer miles, and we're getting much greater fuel efficiency.
- Though this has been happening since the mid-2000s, no president, party, or Congress has been willing to step up and address the problem.

- If Congress doesn't act soon, new federal investment in surface transportation will fall from nearly \$50 billion in FY 2014 to ZERO in FY 2015.
- In the face of funding uncertainty, state and local governments are cutting back.
- Many projects that could improve safety, relieve congestion, and facilitate freight movement are being put on hold.
- Congress and the President should act to avert the Highway Trust Fund's collapse and provide sustainable, predictable, growing resources for vital programs.
- But Federal policy and investment are only part of the picture.
- We've also got to use private sector expertise and financing to get projects started and completed faster, while easing the strain on state and local budgets.
- Public-private partnerships are one promising part of the solution to our infrastructure funding challenges—but they still require predictable funding streams.

- With the right attitudes and policies, we can unlock over \$250 billion in global private capital available for infrastructure investment.
- But the private sector won't participate if the government gets in the way.
- We need to eliminate the bureaucracy and lawsuits that delay or kill infrastructure projects and raise costs.
- It takes too long to build anything in this country, and that discourages private investment, increases costs, and undermines public confidence.
- Accelerating the permitting process would quickly mobilize economic activity, construction, and hiring from one end of our country to the other.
- It's important to remember that a well-maintained infrastructure system isn't the result of economic growth, it's the framework for it. So it must be a priority.