



October 2, 2017

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As co-chairs of the Democratic Caucus's Rebuilding America Task Force in the United States House of Representatives, we remain concerned that, as your administration enters its tenth month, you have not yet presented Congress with a plan to upgrade our nation's infrastructure. For over a decade, the American Society of Civil Engineers has consistently given our nation's infrastructure a "D" rating, which signifies that "the infrastructure is in poor to fair condition and mostly below standard...a large portion of the system exhibits significant deterioration..." and "condition and capacity are of serious concern with strong risk of failure." In light of your repeated pledges, both as a candidate and as president, to create good-paying jobs, improve the quality of life for hardworking Americans, and make our country more competitive, we remain willing to work with you to enact a bipartisan package of infrastructure investments that meet these criteria.

As part of our mission, the Rebuilding America Task Force is committed to advancing bipartisan, commonsense proposals that will put Americans back to work by modernizing our nation's infrastructure; expanding job opportunities in key industries; launching a school construction boom; updating our power grid, internet, and water infrastructure; and taking a visionary approach to the projects needed to put our country at the forefront of innovation.

With these goals in mind, the following are fundamental principles that should be part of any infrastructure plan:

Creating Jobs: We all know that a massive federal investment in modernizing our infrastructure will create jobs. One estimate shows that for every one billion dollars invested in rebuilding America, 27,000 jobs are created.

But perhaps equally important is the quality of the jobs created. Investments in infrastructure produce jobs that allow skilled workers and tradesmen to earn family-sustaining wages, access to health and retirement benefits, and a ladder into the middle class. Furthermore, these investments have ripple effects into local economies, as those performing the work tend to spend their paychecks in the communities where they live.

Real Federal Investment: We must also invest real resources into our infrastructure. While there may certainly be some cases where privatization and public-private partnerships make sense, the vast majority of projects require direct, robust federal investment. We must avoid accounting gimmicks that make it appear we are making a large-scale investment, when in reality we are only selling off assets and pushing the responsibility for paying for projects to future generations.

Focus on All-of-the-Above Infrastructure Plan: We urge you to undertake an expansive definition of infrastructure to ensure we not only meet the critical needs of modernizing our nation's roads and bridges, but also our ports, passenger and freight rail network, and airports. We should use this opportunity to rethink our systems, electrify our transportation network, and give people sustainable options to get where they need to go. We also urge visionary thinking that includes upgrading our energy grid, water infrastructure, and enhancements to systems that will increase resilience to the threats of both terrorism and climate change. Finally, recognizing the importance of an educated workforce, we urge you to include financing for new school construction and a modernization of the broadband network to ensure equal access to information for students and families, whether they live in cities, suburbs, exurbs or rural communities.

Ensuring a Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work: Any infrastructure package must include the use of prevailing wage and other applicable worker protections in order to protect the taxpayers' investment and ensure the highest quality infrastructure for the American people and businesses. The prevailing wage has guaranteed that the federal government has received a good return on its investment of taxpayer money, while protecting the wages of workers in localities where federal dollars are invested. The use of the prevailing wage prevents a race to the bottom among contractors - a race that would lead to a shoddy product and a greater cost to taxpayers - while also ensuring the income derived from these family-sustaining wages is reinvested into local communities.

Utilizing Existing Apprenticeship Infrastructure: In order to put Americans back to work rebuilding our infrastructure, they will need the skills and training necessary to succeed on a modern worksite. The safest, most highly skilled and productive construction craft workers receive their training through privately-funded, registered apprenticeship programs that utilize a labor-management partnership. These programs provide the most current and state-of-the-art curricula needed to meet the certifications of a modern construction workforce. In order to maximize the efficiency of taxpayers' investment in infrastructure, we urge you to avoid duplicating education and training efforts and instead rely upon the existing registered apprenticeship model.


Re-Connecting our Country: Infrastructure investments produce broad-based prosperity for American businesses and workers, facilitating social mobility and access to jobs, educational opportunities, people, and ideas. By investing in a 21st century transportation network, we can ambitiously connect our entire country through affordable high-speed internet and passenger rail; cleaning our air and water; and shortening our travels in public transit, cars, and planes. We can make often-forgotten parts of our country better connected and more attractive places for investment. Connecting rural and low-income communities to economic opportunity is a goal both Democrats and Republicans share.

Improving Quality of Life and Competitiveness: As a New Yorker, we are sure you know firsthand about the problems of traffic congestion. It isn't just a waste of time or patience, it's also a drain on both businesses' competitiveness and household budgets. That is why we urge you to reinforce that infrastructure upgrades are something that will benefit everyone – from subway commuters, to parents picking up their kids at soccer practice, to business-people shipping and receiving deliveries, to people who enjoy breathing clean air. The costs of inadequate infrastructure investment are exhibited all around us. Americans spend 5.5 billion hours in traffic each year, costing families more than \$120 billion in extra fuel and lost time. American businesses pay \$27 billion a year in extra freight transportation costs, increasing shipping delays and raising prices on everyday products. Underinvestment impacts safety, too. There were more than 33,000 traffic fatalities in 2013 alone, and roadway conditions are a significant factor in one-third of traffic-related fatalities.

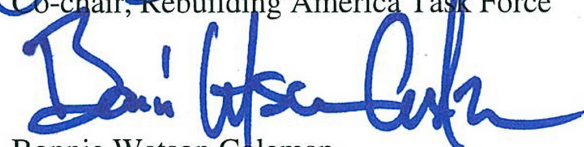
Infrastructure is something Americans of all backgrounds, across party lines, can support. We urge you to keep your word and release a comprehensive infrastructure plan and encourage you to work in a bipartisan fashion. We, as the co-chairs of the Rebuilding America Task Force, stand ready to work with you, putting politics aside, to benefit all of our shared constituents.

Sincerely,


Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress (PA-17)
Co-chair, Rebuilding America Task Force


Donald Norcross
Member of Congress (NJ-1)
Co-chair, Rebuilding America Task Force


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress (CA-34)
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Co-chair, Rebuilding America Task Force