

INFRASTRUCTURE - THE TIME IS NOW

Rebuild crumbling infrastructure, create jobs, and grow the economy

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT MEANS JOB CREATION

North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) continues to support a comprehensive, aggressive investment strategy to meet our infrastructure needs and provide for careers in the construction industry for millions of Americans across the country.

Congress must address this challenge and pass an infrastructure package that is broad in scope and robust in public funding, providing job and training opportunities to current and future construction workers as we continue to emerge from the COVID-19 economy. We applaud President Biden for his bold vision, detailed in the American Jobs Plan, which will invest nearly \$2.6 trillion in our nation's infrastructure.

The hallmark of any such package MUST be strong labor standards, and our message to Congress and the Biden Administration is consistent and clear: Any infrastructure project that receives federal financial assistance, be it through grants, loans, bonds, or tax incentives, must include strong labor protections. For NABTU, these labor standards include:

- The consistent application of the Davis-Bacon Act, a law designed to protect the family supporting wages of blue-collar workers in the construction industry by prohibiting contractors on protected federal projects from paying workers less than the local going rate, known as the local prevailing wage.
- The utilization of registered apprentices, which will ensure training opportunities for the apprentices in our registered apprenticeship programs on federally assisted construction projects and allow NABTU training programs to continue to diversify the construction workforce.
- An ABC test to combat worker misclassification and wage theft, which is rampant in the construction industry, and allow our contractor partners to compete on a level playing field which is far too often manipulated by low-road contractors.
- Neutrality agreements that will empower workers and allow them to make a decision on whether or not to form or join a union without outside interference.
- Local hire standards, which will ensure the communities where federally assisted infrastructure projects are being built can benefit from the job opportunities such projects create.

- And strong Buy America requirements that will strengthen the domestic supply chain and ensure that the materials building trades workers utilize on federally assisted projects are sourced in the United States.

Nowhere are these labor standards needed more than in the clean energy industry, which benefits from a series of tax incentives that currently require no labor standards whatsoever. As a result, while the clean energy industry has greatly impacted the fight against climate change, it has had disastrous impacts on workers' wages and benefits, contributing to the rising economic inequality felt by far too many communities. If we are to ensure that the jobs created in this industry are in fact good jobs, and jobs that are attractive options to building trades members currently working in more traditional energy occupations that pay higher wages, then the tax credits that benefit the clean energy industry must abide by strong labor protections.

We call on members of the House and Senate to work together with the Administration to pass a bill that:

- **Prioritizes Labor Standards** that strengthen the construction workforce by providing career pathways through quality registered apprenticeship programs and with the application of the Davis-Bacon Act which provides for family-sustaining wages, combat worker misclassification and wage theft, empower workers, and empower communities through local hire and domestic procurement requirements.
- **Rebuilds our crumbling roads, bridges, and transit systems** that will increase safety for the movement of people and goods, while providing the foundation for long-term economic growth in every community across the nation.
- **Increases investment in schools, public buildings, and vertical construction** by providing for energy-saving retrofits of federally owned public buildings, directing federal funds to grant programs for school construction, and increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- **Increases funding for water infrastructure** to update the vast majority of America's drinking water and critical wastewater systems which were built over 50 to 150 years ago. The effects are felt everywhere from big cities to small towns and rural communities. Disturbingly, billions of gallons of raw sewage are discharged into local waterways each year as a result of aging sewer systems ill-equipped to handle modern volumes.
- **Supports mechanical insulation and energy efficiency** - will create more jobs and is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce emissions in our public

institutions, water infrastructure, industrial facilities, and all commercial and residential buildings.

- **Strengthens our energy infrastructure by** increasing funding for electric grid modernization that will ensure a reliable and affordable supply of electricity for the 21st century, support infrastructure improvements to enhance energy security, deploy smart grid technology and efficiency upgrades, and expand opportunities to bring secure, clean and renewable energy sources, such as nuclear energy and offshore wind, to residential and commercial consumers.
- **Increases investment in public infrastructure through innovative financing mechanisms,** either through an infrastructure bank or otherwise, that ensure workers and communities interests are protected and that dedicate and direct public and private funds to worthy infrastructure projects.