



## INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY PRIORITIES

North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU), along with its fourteen affiliated unions representing three million skilled craft professionals, supports a broad-based, aggressive investment strategy to meet our infrastructure needs and provide for careers in the construction industry for millions of Americans across the country. NABTU calls on lawmakers to address this challenge and pass a multi-trillion infrastructure package that is broad in scope, robust in public and private funding and has the strongest worker and environmental standards to ensure we rebuild America in a safe and timely way while economically boosting communities across the country.

### Strong Labor Standards

Whether public or private infrastructure is funded by government direct spending programs (grants, appropriations, infrastructure bank, trust funds) or through the tax code (bonds and tax credits), compliance with strong labor standards by the public or private sector recipient of all, or part, of those funds must be required.

- *Prevailing Wage* – requiring that prevailing wage be paid on any infrastructure project is the minimum labor standard that should be mandatory. The Davis Bacon Act is a law designed to protect the family-supporting wages of blue-collar workers in the construction industry. The law prohibits contractors on federally funded projects from paying workers less than the local going rate, known as the local prevailing wage.
- *Project Labor Agreements* – A project labor agreement (PLA) is a business model that increases the efficiency and quality of construction projects for the public and private sectors. It is a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for all workers and their respective crafts on one or more construction projects. Because they require participation in registered apprenticeship programs, they create a “pathway to a career” for veterans, women and minorities who can “learn while they earn” as they are trained on-the-job and in the classroom. PLAs should be required on infrastructure projects costing \$25 million or more.
- *Registered Apprenticeship* – these world class, state-of-the-art “earn as you learn” programs allow an individual to work in a job and go to school at the same time – a debt free beginning to a career. NABTU's registered apprenticeship programs number over 1600 training centers and 20,000 instructors nationwide. In fact, if it were a four-year degree granting institution, it would be the largest in the country. All contractors on an infrastructure project should be required to participate in a registered apprenticeship program for each of the construction crafts they employ.
- *Neutrality Agreements* – contractors should be required to sign neutrality agreements. A neutrality agreement is a contract in which an employer and a union establish rules and procedures for the recruitment of workers to join a union.
- *Worker Misclassification* – the construction industry is ground zero for this nationwide problem that sees contractors withholding health and welfare benefits, adequate wages, FMLA and access to unemployment insurance from their workers by misclassifying them

'as independent contractors. Any infrastructure bill must require a worker misclassification test known as the ABC test to prevent the exploitation of workers.

## **Solve Infrastructure's Long-Term Funding Problem**

**Address the funding mechanism** of the Highway Trust Fund to achieve long-term stability, either through increasing the user fee or moving toward a Vehicle Miles Traveled based system.

**Increase investment in public infrastructure through innovative financing** mechanisms, such as an infrastructure bank and public private partnerships (P3s) that protect worker and community interests and that dedicate and direct public and private funds to worthy infrastructure projects. While not the entire solution to our infrastructure funding challenges, increased investment of private capital can augment investments from existing federal programs, alleviating some of the funding pressures faced by local, state, and federal agencies.

**Resurrect Build America Bonds** and improve the use of private activity bonds as well as tax credits to fund more infrastructure via the tax code.

## **A Comprehensive Investment in Infrastructure**

**Fix our roads and bridges** that are in dire need of repair. With over 50,000 bridges in America rated as structurally deficient, our nation cannot afford not to act. NABTU believes that Congress must come together and tackle this challenge in a bipartisan way: one that not only fixes our current infrastructure problems, but provides long-term certainty and sustainability to the Highway Trust Fund so that we prevent further deterioration from occurring.

**Strengthen our nation's airport infrastructure** to reduce congestion and increase safety. NABTU supports bolstering programs such as the Airport Improvement Program and other existing funding streams which provide critically needed funding for the planning and development of public-use airports across the United States.

**Increase funding for water projects** that improve water quality and lead to increased economic development. With many American drinking water and wastewater systems being over 50 years old, and in some instances, over 100 years old, NABTU supports repairing and replacing outdated systems through the greater utilization and funding of the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. Further, NABTU supports fully funding WRDA and WIFIA programs to make needed repairs to our waterways across the country.

**Retrofit our public buildings** to make them energy efficient. NABTU supports making the needed investments that will lead to long-term operating cost savings while creating thousands of new jobs for building trades members. Further, NABTU supports utilizing the existing, budget neutral Energy Savings Performance Contract and Utility Energy Service Contract Authority to jump-start this critical priority.

**Strengthen our energy infrastructure** to ensure the safe delivery of energy sources to cities, businesses, and homes. There is no mistaking the fact that our current energy infrastructure, including generation, storage, transmission and distribution facilities, is inadequate to meet our current needs. NABTU supports making the critical investments needed to modernize our energy delivery systems, from electrical grids to pipelines, as

well as power generation facilities that ensure affordable energy for American consumers.

***Invest in the future by repairing existing schools and building new ones.*** According to the Department of Education, roughly half of American K-12 schools are in need of renovation, repair, and modernization. NABTU supports aggressive investments to ensure our children can learn in a safe, clean environment.