



June 16, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker and members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 69 chapters representing more than 21,000 members, I write today to applaud the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation for recognizing the importance of improving our nation's infrastructure in the Surface Transportation Investment Act.

ABC is encouraged by the bipartisan efforts to move this legislation forward and generally supports the tenets of this bill, as it seeks to reauthorize the expiring surface transportation legislation, the 2015 FAST Act. This bipartisan legislation would build off of the [ABC-supported](#) Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act (STRA), to make significant investments in the development and maintenance of our nation's surface transportation infrastructure at historic levels through existing funding formulas while streamlining regulations to remove barriers that create inefficiencies in completing projects.

ABC would like to provide feedback to the committee on section 5020, which allows grant recipients to implement a local hire, or other geographical or economic hiring preference related to the use of labor for construction of a project funded by the grant, including pre-hire agreements. ABC remains concerned that local hire requirements and pre-hire agreements such as project labor agreements restrict competition from quality contractors and local workers and needlessly increase the cost of construction and undermine industry safety and workforce development best practices. Additionally, PLAs could even hinder the ability of local businesses and local workers to participate in these critical projects. As the committee marks this bill, ABC urges it to strike section 5020 to ensure fair and open competition on taxpayer-funded infrastructure projects.

As highlighted in a [letter](#) from eight senators to the Senate Environment and Public Works and Commerce, Science and Transportation Committees, the most cost-effective way to rebuild infrastructure is to promote a fair and open competitive procurement process, free from project labor agreement mandates and preferences. ABC encourages Congress to move forward with measures that ensure that all contracts funded through infrastructure legislation are awarded through a fair and competitive bidding process that allows all qualified contractors to deliver the best quality projects at the best cost to taxpayers.

ABC and our members remain committed to building taxpayer-funded projects with the highest standards of safety and quality, and we stand ready for the opportunity to build and maintain America's surface transportation infrastructure to the benefit of the communities that it will serve.

ABC urges the committee to vote yes on advancing this bill and asks that the committee addresses our concerns with Section 5020, as we believe it will help address the critical infrastructure needs of our nation before the current authorization expires. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Legislative & Political Affairs