



May 26, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment
& Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment
& Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito 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 Environment and Public Works for recognizing the importance of improving our nation's infrastructure in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021.

This bipartisan legislation would 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. By reauthorizing the expiring surface transportation legislation, the 2015 FAST Act, this effort will lead to the sustainable support for America's surface transportation needs well into the future.

ABC is encouraged by the bipartisan efforts to move this legislation forward and supports the bill's efforts to reduce costly and overly burdensome regulations through improvements to the federal permitting and environmental review process, which will make it more efficient to build these major infrastructure projects, delivering results that hardworking taxpayers deserve. By enacting sensible reforms such as modernizing the federal environmental review and permitting process under NEPA and codifying Executive Order 13807: Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Project, or "One Federal Decision", this bill will help ensure that projects are completed on time and on budget, while providing critical protections for our communities and the environment.

ABC is also supportive of the bill's workforce development, training and education section that would provide states with workforce development grants to create pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and career opportunities for on-the-job training and vocational school support, which will all help tackle the industry's skilled workforce shortage—estimated at [430,000 workers in 2021 alone](#). ABC applauds the committee for including an "all-of-the-above" strategy for skill development where states, local communities, workers and employers have the freedom to choose the best way to educate construction employees that maximizes innovation to achieve world-class safety and productivity.

Finally, as highlighted in a [letter from eight senators to the EPW committee](#), the most cost-effective way to rebuild infrastructure is to promote a fair and open competitive procurement process, free from project labor agreement mandates. 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 highest 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, 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen Swearingen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Legislative & Political Affairs