

INFRASTRUCTURE

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Farmers, ranchers and the entire U.S. food chain system depend on reliable infrastructure to grow crops and livestock, deliver products and expand markets. NASDA believes in maintaining fairness and equity within the agriculture community through funding and developing rural roads, highways, waterways, railways and broadband infrastructure.



BACKGROUND

President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law on Nov. 15, 2021. This law provided historic investments in American infrastructure programs, which NASDA supported, specifically:

- \$127 billion for roads, bridges, ports/waterways and other critical infrastructure that will provide farmers and ranchers with consistent and dependable means to move their products and provide financial sustainability for their businesses.
- \$62 billion investment in rural broadband, specifically \$40 billion directly to states for deployment and \$2 billion to be allocated to USDA's ReConnect program.
- \$88 million for the State Fire Assistance program and \$24 million for the Volunteer Fire Assistance program. These programs provide financial and technical assistance to state and local fire departments for wildland fire prevention and suppression.

The entire agriculture industry from pre-farm gate to consumer plate relies heavily on a consistent and dependable transportation system to move its products and equipment, expand markets and provide financial sustainability for businesses. This bill provides the necessary funding to improve the movement of commodities and benefit the entire food supply chain for years to come.

NASDA supports funding the expansion of broadband access to rural communities. Farmers, ranchers and a vast and growing rural food and ag industry depends on broadband just as they do highways, railways and waterways to deliver their products around the world. As the pandemic highlighted, rural communities also need broadband access for health care, government services, educational and business opportunities.

Timing for funding rollout is expected to vary. Various ports projects already underway are now fully funded, and construction is expected to start in January of 2022. This includes projects with goals to open port capacity immediately to mitigate currently supply chain issues.

REGULATORY ACTION

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Implementation

NASDA will closely work with federal agencies as they implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.



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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2021 (H.R. 4996)

- NASDA supports this bipartisan bill designed to support the growth and development of U.S. exports and promote more fair and reciprocal trade in the common carriage of goods by water in the foreign commerce of the United States.
- The House passed this bill by a vote of 364-60.



NASDA ASKS

HIGHWAYS

NASDA believes improvements to the U.S. highway system and bridges are urgently needed. Adequate state and federal funding are needed to maintain these structures.

NASDA supports plans and construction that allow for increased weight on roads and bridges and higher truck weights on federal roads. This can be done through construction and materials improvements, flexibility in numbers of axles carrying the weight and more.

WATERWAYS

NASDA believes the U.S. waterway system is in dire need of improvement and supports efforts to fund lock and dam maintenance, improvement, and in some cases, reconstruction programs. NASDA urges the Army Corps of Engineers to maintain waterways to help ensure a smooth flow of commerce.

RAIL

NASDA believes that Congress and the federal government should increase oversight of railroads, including rates and services, where competition is not present. NASDA supports the expansion of the Surface Transportation Board authority and measures that allow shippers to seek nonperformance arbitration. Further, NASDA supports the ability of state attorneys general, when appropriate, to bring producer or shipper cases to the State Transportation Board for legal remedies.




NASDA also urges all railroads to charge reasonable rates and offer fair, consistent, and equitable rate spreads, service and treatment to all shippers. NASDA believes monthly rail shipper survey information should be published.

BROADBAND

NASDA supports internet access that is inexpensive and easily accessible to its users. NASDA especially supports initiatives that help modernize rural businesses and increase access to technology and information in rural areas through expanded broadband and wireless connection.

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