

Fall 2021

The work we do in Rapid Response is always centered around our core values. When we talk about investing in our nation's infrastructure, it's both an economic issue that impacts our workplaces and a job security issue that impacts our future – this is why it has taken center stage. This is a once in a lifetime chance to invest in ourselves and we just cannot afford to let it pass by.

Read on to see what's at stake and why it is critical to USW members that Congress does this right.

We Supply America

It is no secret that our nation's infrastructure is badly in need of repair. In fact, earlier this year the [American Society of Civil Engineers released its 2021 Report Card \(usw.to/3sv\)](https://www.usw.to/3sv) on infrastructure and gave us an overall C- grade. We know that good jobs and a strong economy are directly tied to our nation's infrastructure, and America can do better.

That's why early this year your union kicked off our We Supply America campaign, starting with a survey where we asked you to tell us how YOU supply America. It is past time for an aggressive approach to modernize our nation's crumbling infrastructure and you told us USW members across all sectors are ready to do their part. Today, in anticipation of massive infrastructure spending by the federal government, we are using the information from that survey to help us partner with our employers to educate lawmakers and others in government on what we do, how our work helps communities, and how we can contribute to rebuilding America's infrastructure.

Right now, a bipartisan infrastructure bill is ready for final Congressional approval. Currently the bill includes \$550 billion dollars of new spending. This could rebuild our nation's infrastructure, economy, and communities. Here is a breakdown of what has been proposed:

1. **\$110 Billion for Roads and Bridges** - This is the biggest ticket item in the bill. Forty-three percent of our public roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and 178 million trips a day are taken across structurally deficient U.S. bridges.

"American workers can make the best products. Quality is important to me. That bridge that my family crosses? I want to make sure they make it across that bridge." - Rhonda Majchrzak, member, USW Local 6787, Cleveland Cliffs.



2. **\$66 Billion for Railroads** - The bill provides money for passenger rail along with other rail needs, like improving rail safety. In 2019, DOT's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reported a total of 11,667 accidents/incidents. A decade ago, the rate was slightly better at 11,247 accidents/incidents. The money this bill would provide could help to ensure that the raw materials needed at our facilities, and the products that we make move throughout the country efficiently and on time.

3. **\$65 Billion for the Power Grid** - All three major components of the electric grid (generation, transmission, and distribution) have an investment gap according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. Increasingly powerful storms and irregular weather events like the recent deep freeze in Texas and hurricanes in Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast are taking a toll. This bill has money to update old lines and cables while also ensuring our electric grid is less susceptible to cyber-attacks, which helps our facilities minimize the downtime and lost production that results from power surges and outages.



4. **\$65 Billion for Broadband** - The White House estimates 30 million Americans do not have reliable internet access. This proposed bill would expand access in rural areas and low-income communities.

"The optical fiber our members make is essential to the construction of broadband networks. These networks are needed across the United States. We can supply, and we will supply, the materials that ensure Americans in rural communities have access to the internet." - Donneta Williams, President, USW Local 1025, Corning.

5. **\$55 Billion for Water Infrastructure** - There is a water main break in the U.S. every two minutes and an estimated 6 billion gallons of treated water is lost each day. That's enough water to fill over 9,000 swimming pools. This bill would upgrade our water systems and include a particular focus on replacing the remaining lead pipes our water continues to flow through daily. This would help to ensure that the water hundreds of USW facilities rely upon to operate every day is delivered without interruption.
6. **\$39 Billion for Public Transit** - The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that 40 percent of buses and 23 percent of subway and rail cars are in poor shape. The bipartisan infrastructure bill would help address these concerns. Modernized and efficient public transit systems throughout the country would aid our members who rely upon them for their daily travels, make public transit accessible to more communities, and help curb the delays associated with heavy traffic and congestion on overcrowded roadways.
7. **\$25 Billion for Airports** - Leading up to the pandemic, our nation's airports have had a significant funding shortfall to address the needs of an increasing number of Americans who are flying. The pandemic hasn't helped the concern. This bill contains funds for major upgrades and expansions at U.S. airports, including upgrading air traffic control towers and systems.

"The 1900 members of our local union manufacture medium radial truck and aircraft tires. Our tires supply America by aiding the transport of goods across our country by truck and commercial cargo, military and private aircraft. Investment in our nation's infrastructure by using goods that are made in the United States, like our tires, will help retain and create jobs like the ones we work every day." - Pete Morton, President, USW Local 831L, Goodyear.



8. **\$17 Billion for Ports** - The nation's more than 300 coastal and inland ports are significant drivers of the U.S. economy, supporting 30.8 million jobs in 2018 and 26% of the total GDP. The bill contains money to significantly improve port infrastructure. USW facilities need modern and efficient ports to receive their raw materials and get the products they make to their customers on time.

In addition, the bill pushes every federal agency to prioritize products and goods that are made here in the U.S. for every infrastructure project that receives federal funding and makes the newly-created "Made in America" office more permanent by adding it into law. It also directs our government agencies to tighten up the compliance and reporting on the federal Buy American Act.

USW members make the components to supply each of these proposed projects, and our public employees operate and maintain our infrastructure. We know what's at stake. That's why in August, we hit the road for our [We Supply America Bus Tour](#). (usw.to/3wX) We made stops across seven states highlighting USW worksites that could be impacted by infrastructure investment, making sure our communities and our legislators heard firsthand how We Supply America.



The bus tour may have ended, but our job is not finished. We must continue to tell our elected officials that now is the time to invest in ourselves, to modernize our infrastructure, and to create and sustain good paying, unionized jobs. Keep an eye on your email to find out how you can help pass this bill!

For more information on our We Supply America campaign go to www.uswvoices.org.

Rapid Response Spotlight

Throughout the years USW Rapid Response has had the privilege to call some of the best activists in the labor movement our own. We know that when our unions core values are under attack, we can count on each and every one of you to step up and get involved. Whether it's getting our information out in your worksites, running local Rapid Response committees, or lobbying at statehouses and in Washington, D.C., you are our most valuable resource.



In the Rapid Response Spotlight, we'd like to take some time each month to get to know you better and shine a light on all the amazing things that you and your locals do for the program. This month's Rapid Response Spotlight features Caleb Phillip, Rapid Response Coordinator from USW Local 2-727 in Menasha, WI. Go to <http://usw.to/RRSpotlightOct21> to learn more about Caleb and why he got involved in Rapid Response, how his first year as a coordinator has gone, and his experience with our We Supply America Campaign.

And keep up the good work! You never know who will be next in the spotlight.

The Rapid Response, Legislative, and Policy Conference is Going Virtual!

The increased COVID-19 infection rates in Washington, D.C., and across the country, as well as our inability to access Capitol Hill and lobby our legislators, has led us to the difficult decision to cancel our in-person conference for 2021. If your local already registered and paid, you will be receiving a refund. Click [HERE \(usw.to/3wY\)](https://usw.to/3wY) to for more information and stay tuned in the coming weeks for details and new dates for our virtual conference!



For more ways to get involved, or to schedule a Rapid Response training for your local please [contact your District Coordinator](#) or email us at uswrr@usw.org.