



COMMITTEE ON

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

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H.R. 2, the Speaker's Partisan Green Infrastructure Wish List

Myths vs. Facts

Myth:

- H.R. 2 focuses first on fixing our roads, bridges, and other infrastructure.

Facts:

- In reality, this partisan bill focuses primarily on meeting the goals of the *Green New Deal* and won't do anything to actually improve our infrastructure because it cannot get the support needed to become law.
- This bill, which the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chair called "the application of the principles of the *Green New Deal*," includes numerous new grant programs and requirements woven throughout existing surface transportation programs that siphon funding away from core functions, like fixing roads and bridges.
- The bill's new mandates and top-down approach provide *less* flexibility for our states and non-federal partners to accomplish the projects and infrastructure priorities of their communities.

Myth:

- The Speaker's bill provides \$500 billion to specifically address our Nation's surface transportation infrastructure, and \$1.5 trillion in total.

Facts:

- While the bill offers significant funding increases for just about every facet of the surface transportation system, its focus on *Green New Deal* climate goals and large increases for transit and passenger rail funding results in significantly less focus on building the infrastructure, including roads and bridges, our communities need and want.
- Instead of recognizing and addressing ongoing issues with the Highway Trust Fund's inevitable insolvency, this bill relies on deficit spending and adds to the taxpayers' growing burdens at a time when many families are struggling with the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 crisis.
- More egregiously, the Majority recently claimed that funding the bill would require bipartisan input suggesting that Republicans work with them to pay for their irresponsible, partisan wish list.

- Non-partisan estimates show that to pay for their bill it would have required doubling the gas tax from 18.3 cents/gallon to 36.6 cents/gallon.
- The diesel tax would also have to be raised 18.3 cents, from 24.3 to 42.6 cents/gallon.
- This is a position many Democrat Members claim to support but when it came time to make the tough decisions on how to fund their bill, the Majority instead chose to put it on the taxpayer's credit card and blame Republicans.

Myth:

- Republicans were unwilling to work with Democrats on a bill that addresses climate issues and other controversial measures.

Facts:

- Republicans were ready to work across the aisle on a bipartisan bill that addresses priorities from both sides.
- Rather than address climate-related provisions in a bipartisan manner, the Democrats embraced overreaching, heavy-handed mandates, that takes away flexibility from our non-federal partners.
- Republicans, including Ranking Member Garrett Graves of the Select Committee on Climate, submitted amendments to address infrastructure resiliency to reduce long-term costs from disasters caused by flooding and extreme weather; the Majority made clear that these bipartisan policies did not go far enough to meet their radical agenda.
- We are left to consider nothing more than a massive progressive wish list. In the surface transportation provisions, \$2 out of every \$5 is tied up in *Green New Deal* goals, either through new programs or new green requirements for existing programs.
- There is a difference between addressing the issue and transforming every federal infrastructure program in this bill to address the Majority's climate change agenda.
- With many Americans already out of work because of the pandemic, this costly seismic shift in our transportation programs creates more uncertainty.

Myth:

- The Speaker's bill invests in resiliency and mitigation that will result in the reduction of risk and costs associated with disasters.

Facts:

- While studies have shown that upfront investments in **proven** mitigation measures will reduce risk and future costs, H.R. 2 does not ensure that investment is targeted to proven mitigation measures.
- The Speaker's bill does little to fix the existing highway and transit emergency relief programs to ensure risk reduction and cost savings are primary, as they are under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs.
- Without clear parameters we are just throwing more money at projects without regard to any return on investment or whether the measures will actually reduce risk and save lives.

- The overall approach in the Speaker’s bill focuses on climate change and not effective, proven approaches to mitigation and resiliency.

Myth:

- The Speaker’s bill protects the project review process for infrastructure in order to protect the environment.

Facts:

- The project review process is broken and needs to be updated. This bill does nothing to improve project review efficiency, despite commonsense proposals offered by Committee Republicans, included in the bipartisan Senate bill, and supported by a diverse group of industry stakeholders (including business and labor).
- A more efficient process will not weaken environmental protections.
 - The *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) regulations were put in place more than 40 years ago. While infrastructure needs, technology, the economy, and society have all significantly changed, *NEPA* has not.
 - A proposal by Highways and Transit Ranking Member Rodney Davis (R-IL-13), the *One Federal Decision Act of 2020*, that codifies an executive order to make commonsense reforms in the project review process, and which has strong bipartisan Senate support, was not accepted by the Majority during House markup of H.R. 2.
- Countries such as Canada, Germany, and Australia complete their environmental reviews in two years and still rank higher than the United States on Yale University’s Environmental Performance Index.
 - Yet one federal agency can take an average of 3.7 to 5 years to complete an environmental review, according to the Administration, while some approvals drag on for decades.
- Reducing red tape also has the impact of increasing infrastructure investment.
 - Project delays cost \$3.7 trillion in foregone economic gains in employment, efficiency, and more, according to the Associated General Contractors of America.

Myth:

- Large cities and rural communities alike will benefit under the Speaker’s bill.

Facts:

- The core functions of our system – safely moving people and goods across the country– remain as critical as ever, and the heart of that network is our highway system that connects and serves our communities of all sizes.
- However, many of the policy choices in H.R. 2 clearly favor urban areas over rural America. Money talks: while many programs see some kind of increase in this bill, the Majority’s focus is on huge new funding increases on transportation programs that benefit urban centers while eroding the programs that rural communities rely on more, including diverting critical highway and bridge funding with new programs and *Green New Deal* requirements.

- Transit would receive an approximately **72% total funding increase** over the *FAST Act*, compared to an approximately 42% increase for highways and bridges.
- Rail funding would receive an approximately **450% increase** over the *FAST Act*.
- H.R. 2 restrictions on building new roads again illustrates how this partisan bill leaves behind rural and suburban communities. How will growing communities sustain themselves if they can't build the new roads they need?
- Under the bill's top-down approach, smaller and growing communities looking to expand could be forced into expensive and less-cost effective transit operations, with maintenance and operational costs they may not be able to sustain.

Myth:

- **The Speaker's bill specifically addresses rural infrastructure needs.**

Facts:

- The bill includes some provisions related to rural infrastructure, but its overall focus on *Green New Deal* provisions and its seismic shift toward urban transportation needs leaves rural America further behind.
 - 71% of public road lane-mileage is in rural America, and crashes and fatalities on rural non-Interstate roads occur at more than double the rate as all other roads.
- Rural areas often have difficulty when competing with urban areas for limited funding, including transit funding, but rural areas still have their own unique needs.
- When comparing dedicated funding for rural communities against the funding provided for large urban areas and new green mandates in existing programs that our rural communities rely on most, once again rural areas end up worse off.
 - The Majority's new "Rebuild Rural" grant program provides \$250 million, while grants for electric vehicle charging stations that will mostly benefit urban areas receive \$1.75 billion – seven times as much funding.

Myth:

- **The bill's large proposed increases in transit and rail transportation funding are needed to transform the way we move people.**

Facts:

- This bill forces communities toward more transit and rail operations at a time when social distancing and tremendous uncertainty about the future is likely going to result in less transit ridership.
 - Transit and rail receive approximately **72% and 450% (respectively) total funding increases, compared to a 42% increase in highway and bridge funding.**
 - This bill provides massive funding increases for Amtrak, which currently runs a roughly \$1.5 billion annual deficit that taxpayers cover.
- The bill shifts away from core surface transportation programs and towards transit programs to focus on *Green New Deal* goals.
- The bill expands the Federal Transit Administration's mission to roles in affordable housing and carbon reduction, forcing the agency to divert resources from its core function.

- The bill reverses modest bipartisan efforts that Committee Democrats supported in the 2015 *FAST Act* to help Amtrak operate more like a business and reduce costs to the taxpayer.

Myth:

- The Speaker's bill includes water infrastructure provisions that have received bipartisan support.

Facts:

- Although the bill added provisions on issues that have been addressed in the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the House, or in law on a bipartisan basis in the last two years, in many cases the Majority has altered those measures and broken previous bipartisan agreements.
 - This bill's unrealistic \$40 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) is dramatically higher than the \$14 billion approved in a bipartisan Transportation and Infrastructure Committee bill in October, and omits a key regulatory flexibility provision that has bipartisan support but is not supported by the Speaker's radical environmental allies.
 - In 2018, The Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields program was reauthorized on a bipartisan basis at \$250 million per year through 2023. This partisan bill now significantly increases that number to an impractical \$2.7 billion reauthorization over five-years.