



COMMITTEE ON

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

SAM GRAVES, REPUBLICAN LEADER

## FAQ – H.R. 2, the Speaker’s Partisan Green Infrastructure Wish List

### Surface Transportation

**Question:** Aren’t surface transportation reauthorization and other infrastructure issues typically bipartisan issues?

**Answer:** The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has proven time and again that working in a bipartisan manner is the only path to successfully passing transportation reauthorizations and other infrastructure bills. Although Republicans were ready and willing to again work on a bipartisan bill, Democrats chose a “My Way or the Highway” approach, and their partisan version of the bill (H.R. 2, the *INVEST Act*) passed out of committee with no Republican votes. As the Speaker’s overtook the bill for her partisan wish list, Republicans were not consulted on any of the many provisions airdropped into the bill after markup. This bill has no chance of becoming law and creates even more uncertainty for transportation workers and businesses.

**Question:** How is H.R. 2 paid for?

**Answer:** Deficit spending. Majority Leader Hoyer stated the House would pass this bill without pay-fors, and Democrats – who developed this bill entirely on a partisan basis – now say that they want Republicans to help them figure out how to pay for it.

Under the nearly \$500 billion surface transportation reauthorization piece of H.R. 2, the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) – which pays for federal highway and transit programs – will require a \$145 billion General Fund bailout to cover the cost of the Majority’s irresponsible spending decisions. Instead of trying to find a responsible way to pay for this huge increase in surface transportation funding and addressing the HTF’s long-term solvency issues, the bill simply piles more debt onto future generations.

**Question:** How much of the bill’s nearly \$500 billion for surface transportation goes to Green New Deal priorities?

**Answer:** \$23 billion is provided directly for new Green New Deal (GND) programs, but even more telling is that GND priorities are interwoven throughout the fabric of this partisan bill and the existing federal transportation programs. Nearly \$2 out of every \$5 in surface transportation funding (or \$200 billion) is tied to new GND-related mandates, requirements, and programs.

**Question:** Is a vote against this bill a vote against the environment?

**Answer:** No. While H.R. 2's focus is more on climate issues instead of improving America's infrastructure, the bill takes an absolutely unrealistic, impractical, heavy-handed approach to climate issues. One of the bill's chief sponsors described H.R. 2 as the "application of the principles of the Green New Deal." Instead of working to develop bipartisan solutions or in conjunction with work being done in the private sector to improve the environment, H.R. 2 imposes numerous new mandates, regulations, and enormous costs on communities, businesses, the transportation sector, and the economy.

**Question:** How is the surface transportation program funding distributed among highways, transit, and rail transportation?

**Answer:** H.R. 2 authorizes nearly \$500 billion for surface transportation, representing an increase of \$190 billion, or 72% more than the *FAST Act*. The best way to see the Democrat's priorities is to follow the money. H.R. 2 provides a 449% increase to rail programs and Amtrak and a 72% increase to transit programs. Meanwhile, highway and safety programs both receive approximately 42% increases. These increases are clear indications of the Democrats' prioritization of urban over rural needs.

**Question:** Are there reforms that help complete projects in a timely manner?

**Answer:** No. Democrats rejected commonsense amendments offered by Republicans that would require the government to speed up the permitting process to two years, on par with countries like Canada and Australia. They also rejected an amendment to codify the President's One Federal Decision executive order, a move to improve project review efficiency that has received bipartisan Senate support. These policies are also broadly supported by both business and labor groups.

**Question:** Will this bill help create more jobs and recover from the pandemic?

**Answer:** Infrastructure is important to our economy and the flow of commerce, but it's reckless to push such a massive bill that relies so heavily on more deficit spending, adds tons of money to programs without providing any reforms to reduce costs associated with the infrastructure project approval process, and ignores the Highway Trust Fund solvency issue. In addition, the partisan reforms of our federal transportation programs that focus more on climate change and less on building infrastructure projects will only create more uncertainty for transportation workers and businesses.

**Question:** How does H.R. 2 affect surface transportations programs and the flexibilities states need?

**Answer:** H.R. 2 reverses accomplishments of the current surface transportation law (the *FAST Act*) by significantly increasing the number of surface transportation programs, diluting available funding. Each new program has its own intricate requirements and restrictions that states must follow. In addition, surface transportation programs are generally more rigid. For example, this partisan bill prevents investments that increase highway capacity and increases investments that are needed to be made on non-roadway infrastructure. Together, the new programs and rigidity increase the complexity of the entire surface transportation program for states and other recipients. States and non-federal partners need more flexibility – not less.

**Question:** Will this help rural areas with access to supplies and resources?

**Answer:** No. Overall, this bill disproportionately pours money into urban transit programs – tripling their funding – while leaving rural road and bridge projects competing for less resources. While the Majority creates a 'Rebuild Rural' grant program that serves as their token new program to 'help' rural America, that program is dwarfed by new programs that favor urban areas such as the nearly \$2 billion provided for

electric vehicle charging stations and the Gridlock Reduction grant program that only the top 10 most populous cities in the country are eligible for. In addition, the Green New Deal mandates on existing federal transportation programs will disproportionately impact rural America; the programs these areas rely on most will be diluted by these changes.

**Question:** Aren't electric vehicles (EVs) the car of the future? Shouldn't we be investing in them now to help the environment?

**Answer:** This bill invests in EVs through a series of uncoordinated pilot programs that do not support developing the technology, but rather throw money at useless green pet projects like installing EV charging stations at United States Postal Service (USPS) locations.

## **Rail Transportation**

**Question:** How much does H.R. 2 authorize for rail programs?

**Answer:** H.R.2 authorizes \$58.3 billion for rail programs. This funding level represents an increase of 449% above current law and is by far the largest increase provided for any mode under the surface transportation section of the bill.

**Question:** Does the bill fund Amtrak, a for-profit company?

**Answer:** Yes. The bill authorizes \$29 billion for Amtrak, which **triples Amtrak funding** while providing no justification for such an increase, including how to pay for it. The bill omits any requirements that Amtrak attempt to make a profit and reverses past reforms to get Amtrak to operate more like a real business. Notably, the bill gives Amtrak's National Network (NN) more than \$16 billion over 5 years, despite the fact that the NN struggles to attract riders and annually loses money even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Question:** Does the bill support freight railroads?

**Answer:** No. Freight railroads strongly oppose the bill. It creates unneeded new labor mandates that do not improve safety or efficiency, and increase legal exposure to freights sharing tracks with Amtrak. The bill creates new grant programs that favor urban areas over rural needs and favors other sectors of the railroad industry over freights. The bill also creates and funds unnecessary Green New Deal mandates that offer no benefit to the freight rail industry.

**Question:** Wouldn't prohibiting transportation of liquid natural gas (LNG) by rail make energy safer and greener?

**Answer:** No. LNG transport by rail results in very few accidents. LNG is a clean-burning source of energy that is much cleaner than coal and other fossil fuels. The Majority's resistance to LNG by rail has less to do with transportation and more about favoring radical environmental policies that seek to prevent the use of affordable American made energy like natural gas.

## **Aviation**

**Question:** Do the aviation provisions in the bill help that struggling industry?

**Answer:** These provisions were airdropped into the bill with no opportunity for Republicans to work on any of these provisions. While Republicans share the broader goals of addressing airport infrastructure needs, development of alternative and cleaner burning aviation fuels, and aerospace job creation, there are concerns with how funding is allocated and how airport project provisions will impact the Federal

Aviation Administration's (FAA's) Trust Fund, which is already at risk of insolvency. This will likewise impact air traffic control operations and FAA's safety oversight programs.

**Question:** Given the concerns with aviation emissions, why oppose H.R. 2's environmental provisions?

**Answer:** The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has a long record of addressing aviation emissions in a bipartisan fashion and, given the global nature of aviation, internationally. Current FAA reauthorization law, approved last Congress by an overwhelming majority, included provisions addressing clean energy, airport and airplane emissions, and alternative aviation fuels.

## **Water Resources**

**Question:** Is the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) reauthorization in H.R. 2 the same as the bipartisan bill the Committee approved in October?

**Answer:** No. H.R. 1497, which the Committee passed in October, was developed jointly and approved in bipartisan fashion, with authorization levels of \$14 billion over 5 years and a key provision providing widely supported flexibility to meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. The language airdropped into H.R. 2 omits this important flexibility provision and dramatically increases the authorization level to an unrealistic \$40 billion over 5 years.

**Question:** Shouldn't we pass this bill to improve water infrastructure investments, and help clear the Army Corps' projects backlog?

**Answer:** Water resources and wastewater infrastructure is vital to protect the public health of our Nation, to ensure our global economic competitiveness, and to protect trillions of dollars of property against natural disasters. However, it's reckless to push such a massive bill that relies so heavily on more deficit spending without providing any reforms to reduce costs.

## **Resiliency**

**Question:** Doesn't H.R. 2 include mitigation and resiliency provisions supported by both parties?

**Answer:** Yes; however, the resiliency provisions in the bill do not ensure funding will be invested in activities shown to actually reduce risk, costs, and loss of life. Without ensuring that additional funding for resiliency will be invested in proven measures and in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation programs, not only will the additional funding do little to improve resiliency but may actually conflict with proven mitigation measures.