

THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL

August 3, 2021

The Honorable Ed Markey
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey,

On behalf of The New England Council, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for all you have done to help guide our nation through one of the greatest health emergencies the world has ever faced. As more Americans receive vaccinations against the coronavirus, it brings our economy one step closer to recovery. However, there is more left to do; and we at the Council believe that passage of a robust infrastructure package will help meet numerous and often long-standing unmet needs that will help our region's businesses remain competitive and allow our residents to thrive.

As such, we were encouraged by the bold infrastructure framework that was agreed-upon in June by a bipartisan contingent of Senators and President Joe Biden. This five-year infrastructure deal would fund so-called "traditional" infrastructure – roads, bridges, rail, transit, ports & airports, and water systems. In addition, the deal called for new infrastructure spending which would be allocated towards those traditional infrastructure items along with an expanded list of core infrastructure such as broadband, resiliency, and electric vehicle infrastructure. As for financing the new spending, the agreement called for more than a dozen ways to do so, including: redirecting unused unemployment insurance payments; re-purposing certain unspent COVID-19 relief funds; extending customs fees; reinstating certain Superfund fees; and selling off telecom spectrum to name a few.

As you are aware, on July 28, 2021, a deal was reached in the Senate which formally enshrines many of the goals of the bipartisan White House/Senate agreement in legislative text. Besides baseline funding, there is some \$550 billion in new spending over the next five years, which - at roughly \$23 billion less than the original agreement - represents a compromise that is backed by members of both parties. Also, the bill includes a number of the "pay fors" from the original agreement as well as new funding sources that are designed to maximize support among the members of the Senate.

You may recall that in May 2020, the Council wrote you with a [list of priorities](#) that our members felt should be included in whatever infrastructure legislation Congress chose to consider. Among these items were:

- Roads & Bridges – roughly 8.4 percent of New England's bridges are structurally deficient and yearly increases in number of vehicles and drivers has put more stress on our roadways;
- Transit – Residents in our region count on transit to provide a safe, affordable and reliable means of commuting while for some transit is their only or primary mobility option;
- Airports – Changes to and growth in freight and passenger air travel will require upgrades to existing airports across the region;

The New England Council

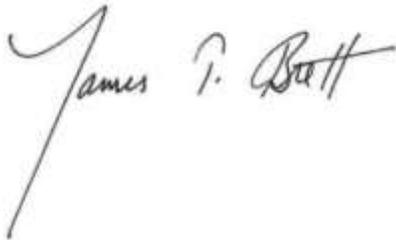
98 North Washington Street, Suite 303 • Boston, Massachusetts 02114 • (617) 723-4009
1411 K Street, NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20005 • (202) 547-0048
www.newenglandcouncil.com

- Ports – Enhanced on-shore facility capabilities and channels that can accommodate the vessels that will bring goods and allow for exports are essential;
- Water Infrastructure – Besides the need to meet new requirements for a growing region, our aging systems, some approaching or surpassing a century old, need replacing as well;
- Broadband – A critical need for New England as the growth in telework, telehealth, and remote learning during the pandemic demonstrated;
- Rail – Including Amtrak and feeder systems into New England, rail helps alleviate congestion on our roads and provides another transportation option to the public;
- Resiliency – Whether it's new construction or necessary upgrades, climate resiliency must be a requisite consideration for project designers and managers alike;
- Energy Systems – Energy reliability (generation, transmission, distribution) is key for our economy and electric vehicle charging stations should be included as well;
- Digital Tools – Technologies that can be used in planning, design, construction management and operations of infrastructure.

We are pleased that the Senate legislation included these items and other crucial infrastructure priorities for our region like addressing PFAS contamination. **As such, the New England Council fully endorses the updated text to H.R. 3684 and urges the Senate to adopt this legislation.**

Not since the Eisenhower Administration has Congress had such an opportunity to put its stamp on a package that will so boldly affect infrastructure in a manner that will benefit virtually every individual in New England and across the United States. Congress also will likely look to address human infrastructure needs in the weeks ahead and the New England Council anticipates weighing-in separately at that time. For now, we urge passage of this bipartisan legislation – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – so we may begin the process of upgrading America's infrastructure and driving continued economic growth.

Sincerely,



James T. Brett
President & CEO

The New England Council

98 North Washington Street, Suite 303 • Boston, Massachusetts 02114 • (617) 723-4009
1411 K Street, NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20005 • (202) 547-0048
www.newenglandcouncil.com