

INCREASING FEDERAL ROLE IN THE ASSESSMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCING OF CRITICAL NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, every U.S. city plays a vital role in our nation's economy serving as centers of transportation, technology, and education for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. will not experience a first class economy without a first class infrastructure and the critical role that cities play in the national economy suggests that local infrastructure needs should be a national issue of priority; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2005 Urban Mobility Report, gridlock, decaying roads and bridges, and deteriorating transportation systems are costing the U.S. economy billions in lost productivity; and

WHEREAS, Federal investment in infrastructure, as a percentage of federal spending, continues to decline creating a substantial funding void for major infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, Federal agencies continue to hand down mandates related to the development, operation, and maintenance of major infrastructure projects to state and local governments but fail to provide the funding necessary to achieve these mandates; and

WHEREAS, the nation's infrastructure was graded by the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the average grade was "D," or poor, for all infrastructure including aviation, bridges, dams, drinking water, energy, hazardous waste, navigable waterways, public parks and recreation, rail, roads, schools, security, solid waste, transit, and wastewater; and

WHEREAS, estimates to simply *maintain* the current condition of our public infrastructure exceed existing revenue streams at all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, while progress has been made in the last decade at the federal, state and local level to better manage our public infrastructure, this progress has generally been in the form of sporadic, stop-gap efforts and is not reflective of the broader, large-scale investment needed for operations, maintenance, and improvement of our public infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. economy and the quality of life for many Americans rests on this nation's network of critical infrastructure, and to allow our major public infrastructure to deteriorate is to allow our economy to fail and to invite a national crisis;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges the Congress to immediately address the country's infrastructure financing gap through short-term measures such as expanding the use of flexible tolling provisions and extending to all infrastructure projects those Federal policy options that enable public-private partnerships and stimulate greater investment by the private sector, such as Private Activity Bonds, as well as longer-term strategies for the future such as the development of a more progressive alternative transportation funding system like Mileage/Weight Based Revenue systems and ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors strongly urges the Congress to make our nation's critical infrastructure a top funding priority so as to ensure that all infrastructure of regional and national significance (including aviation, bridges, dams, drinking water, energy, hazardous waste, navigable waterways, public parks and recreation, rail, roads, schools, security, solid waste, transit, and wastewater) receives adequate federal funding, as a supplement to state and local funds, for ongoing maintenance and continued improvement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors strongly urges the Congress recognize the critical role cities play in the national economy by enacting legislation that will both reverse the decline in the federal share of infrastructure financing and require full federal funding of federally imposed mandates on state and local infrastructure projects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors strongly encourages Congress to enact legislation that will require Federal agencies to systematically report and update critical infrastructure needs so that decision makers at all levels of government can prepare to respond to immediate, short-term and long-term infrastructure demands and strategically plan for the requisite funding of those projects and future financing needs.

Submitted by:
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