

Rebuild the American Dream by Investing in America's Infrastructure

1. Invest in America's Infrastructure. Rebuild our crumbling bridges, dams, levees, ports, water and sewer lines, railways, roads and public transit. We must invest in high-speed Internet and a modern, energy-saving electric grid. These investments will create good jobs and rebuild America. To help finance these projects, we need national and state infrastructure banks.

"Maintaining our levees and dams isn't pork barrel spending, it's an urgent priority, and that's what we'll do when I'm President." - Barack Obama, [campaign speech](#), U.S. Conference of Mayors, June 21, 2008

The Problem

For decades America has deferred maintenance of our public infrastructure – our roads, bridges, airports, ports, rail, levees, schools, broadband, wastewater and sewage systems, energy systems, and waterways. This infrastructure serves the public's safety and welfare needs and supports the nation's economic growth and competitiveness. This is a *core function of government* and we aren't doing it.

Facts

- The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has [graded our infrastructure 'D,'](#) estimating that \$2 trillion must be spent just to bring it up to "satisfactory" condition.
- [More than 25%](#) of bridges in the United States need significant repairs and/or are [handling more traffic](#) than they were designed to carry. [*Christian Science Monitor*, US Dept. of Transportation]
- Nearly a third of all [highway fatalities](#) are related to substandard road conditions, obsolete road designs, or roadside hazards. [New America Foundation]
- A significant [water line bursts](#) every two minutes in the United States. [*New York Times*]
- 1 in 3 schools are [bad enough](#) "to interfere with the delivery of instruction." [US Dept. of Ed]
- By 2020 the nation's deteriorating surface transportation infrastructure will [cost the American economy](#) more than 870,000 jobs and suppress the growth of GDP by \$3.1 trillion. [ASCE]

Solutions

- **Infrastructure Building Creates Jobs:** Each billion dollars spent on infrastructure [creates](#) 18,000 jobs. \$500 billion invested in [transportation](#) infrastructure can produce 7.2 million new jobs, including 3,236,686 construction jobs, 761,321 manufacturing jobs, and 625,081 jobs in business and professional services. Investing \$20 billion in [school construction](#), maintenance and greening can generate 250,000 skilled jobs. [Political Economy Research Institute, EPI]
- **Creating Jobs Costs Less:** Investing in infrastructure [costs less](#) than the costs of high levels of unemployment – lower tax revenues, loss of business activity, and ALL forms of government spending resulting from slow growth and increased joblessness. [PBS, MSNBC]
- **Public Investment Primes the Pump:** National and State Infrastructure Banks can [leverage](#) ~ \$640 billion in private investments from a \$10 billion federal contribution. [Sen. John Kerry]
- **Infrastructure Saves Time and Money:** Just \$78 billion in infrastructure spending would [save](#) Americans 180 million hours in travel time each year, deliver an average of \$1,060 to each family and protect \$10,000 in GDP for every man, woman and child in the U.S. [ASCE]