



July 21, 2021

Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of the more than three million members and supporters of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the 775,000 active and retired members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), we write in support of the grid modernization and EV charging components of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework while also encouraging Congress to go beyond these important first steps and seize the opportunity to pass more extensive legislation modeled after rest of President Biden's American Jobs Plan and the Build Back Better agenda. A truly ambitious bill will create millions of high-quality, family-support union jobs across the country, aggressively invest in clean energy, grid modernization, transportation electrification and other solutions to the climate crisis to rapidly cut emissions while driving the broad-based, durable, equitable and just recovery we need.

We can no longer wait to fully address the problem of our outdated and failing infrastructure system. Many aspects of the current infrastructure system were built to reflect and reinforce economic and racial inequalities that continue to this day. Our infrastructure system today is not prepared to handle the challenges presented by climate change. There needs to be major investments in a cleaner, more resilient, and more equitable transportation system, power grid, water infrastructure and building and housing sectors in order to meet our national goal of a 50 to 52 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The American Jobs Plan promises to make these necessary investments and will create short and long-term job opportunities for workers and the communities they live in.

We strongly support the following goals:

- Upgrade and expand our nation's electrical transmission system with expanded interregional transmission using High Voltage Direct Current lines overseen by a grid development authority.
- Invest in electric and other zero emission vehicles at levels where they will represent six in ten new auto sales in 2030 with an ambitious transformation of the federal vehicle fleet and the nation's transit and school bus fleets.
 - This requires a massive buildout in charging systems with at least 500,000 new chargers installed nationwide by electricians certified under the Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP).
- Invest more in public transit systems and passenger rail, and electrify the freight system.
- Upgrade and electrify our nation's port infrastructure to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while preparing ports for climate change-induced sea level rise.

- Improve our nation's public, commercial and residential buildings with energy efficiency upgrades, healthier building materials, and switching to electricity for heating and cooking.
- Revitalize American manufacturing with incentives for domestic advanced manufacturing, domestic procurement requirements, and the reduction of industrial emissions.
- Ensure at least 40 percent of benefits go to the communities who need it most, prioritizing low income, environmental justice, and energy transition communities.

Investing in goals like these will create economic opportunity for millions throughout the United States. Currently, there are over three million workers in the domestic clean economy and while many of these jobs are a step-up for workers entering the clean economy, the pay and rates of unionization in the clean economy still need to be increased. Congress must take steps to ensure clean economy jobs that are created are family-supporting union jobs available to all Americans, including those from low-income communities, communities of color, and from states historically hostile to racially integrated labor unions.

Federal investments for the clean economy must be paired with new incentives, standards, and requirements that will increase the number of high-quality, family-sustaining jobs and ensure disadvantaged communities have access to high-quality jobs. Prevailing wages, project labor agreements, pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, employer organizing neutrality, targeted hiring and community benefit agreements are all tools to make major clean energy projects deliver better results for workers and communities. Workers who earn a fair wage in stable jobs can be the engine to revitalize our communities, both in the wake of the economic impacts from COVID and through the middle of the 21st century.

Our communities and working families have already paid a high price from infrastructure underinvestment, global competition, and policies that place our communities last, instead of first. This includes both the costs of undermining labor standards and the costs of pollution and climate change. However, we do not have to let those costs continue to rise. We have a chance to change course and work together to pass legislation modeled after the American Jobs Plan that will ensure this recovery builds back better and delivers a future that is healthier, more resilient, more just, and more prosperous.

Now is the time for us to be bold. To make the transition to a clean, sustainable future. These are shared priorities between our two organizations, but we each have more priorities beyond those mentioned in this letter. While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework is a first step much more needs to be done and funding levels need to be increased to meet our communities' needs. We urge Congress to fully deliver this needed change and we stand ready to support these efforts.

Sincerely,



Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers



Mitchell Bernard
President and Chief Counsel
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