



American Society of Civil Engineers

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Statement of
The American Society of Civil Engineers
On the
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
Before the
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

As an initial matter, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) firmly believes that any economic recovery legislation should contain significant new funding for many of the nation's aging infrastructure systems, which are the indispensable lifelines of our economy. The nation's surface transportation systems, wastewater treatment facilities, waterways, and airports are all in need of repair and updates.

This nation continues to under invest in infrastructure at the national level. Indeed, the total of all federal spending for infrastructure as a share of all federal spending has steadily declined over the last 30 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

ASCE therefore encourages the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to continue to press for greater funding for infrastructure in the draft legislation from the House Committee on Appropriations entitled the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009." While the draft legislation makes important investments in the nation's infrastructure, this must be viewed only as a first step in the long process of rebuilding our nation's aging infrastructure.

ASCE has long been an advocate for improving and maintaining the nation's infrastructure. The *ASCE 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure* gave the overall condition of the nation's infrastructure a grade of "D" and recommended spending \$1.6 trillion over five years to bring the condition up to an acceptable level. Since that time federal funding has fallen far below that recommended level, and early indications are that the grades will not be markedly improved for the *2009 Report Card*, which will be released on January 28.

We believe that the House Appropriations Committee's stimulus package of January 15 will not only help to create and sustain the millions of jobs necessary to promote a long term national economic recovery, but that it also represents a strong commitment towards addressing the nation's decaying infrastructure. Infrastructure enhances the quality of life, improves our environment, and provides direct economic development. It is the surest way to ensure critical repairs to our economy.

We are also pleased that many of the elements proposed in ASCE's *Principles for Infrastructure Stimulus Investment* have been included in the measure as we believe that the bill's accountability standards will serve to ensure the public that their tax dollars are being well spent and that the investments produce their desired outcomes.

While the proposed levels of investment in the following infrastructure categories are significant, in light of the documented dire needs, the current investment gaps, and the number of ready-to-go projects in the following categories, we urge Congress to consider sustained investment levels in **surface transportation** (highways, bridges, public transit); **airports; wastewater and drinking-water treatment systems; inland waterways**; and **dams and levees**. In particular, increased funding of ready-to-projects in these areas will create more jobs and further promote long term economic recovery while simultaneously helping to rebuild Americas' infrastructure.

We strongly encourage funding of \$7 billion for the construction of water-resources facilities through the Army Corps of Engineers—an increase of \$2.5 billion over the House Appropriations Committee proposal. These funds could be put to use over the next two years to stimulate the local and national economies and to ensure the security and longevity of critically important infrastructure.

Additionally, we urge \$2 billion in additional funding for the Airport Improvement Program to provide \$5 billion in FY 2009 ARRA funding to finance much needed capital improvement projects at the nation's airports.

We also recommend an increase of \$6 billion and \$8 billion respectively over the January 15 bill for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund, bringing their totals to \$12 billion and \$10 billion under ARRA.

In addition to creating jobs and promoting long term economic recovery, investment in America's infrastructure will serve to preserve and enhance public health, safety and welfare. ASCE strongly supports enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 but urges Congress to add funding for the well-documented ready-to-go infrastructure projects.

Finally, ASCE believes that all projects supported by an economic stimulus investment must meet the following fundamental criteria:

- Projects must create and sustain employment increases.

- Investments must provide long term benefits to the public (such as congestion relief).
- Long term maintenance and upkeep needs of all infrastructure projects – existing and new – must be taken into account.
- To ensure accountability and transparency an auditing program must be established to review the program and measure desired outcomes.

As the investments are made, proper attention must be paid to the prioritization and selection of these projects to ensure that the criteria are met. The following principles should guide selection decisions:

- The project should deliver measurable improvements in public health, safety and quality of life.
- The project should provide substantial, broad-based economic benefit.
- The project should be designed and built in a sustainable and cost-effective manner, and proper consideration must be given to life-cycle costs.
- The project should have a significant environmental benefit such as area restoration, improved air quality through reduced congestion and better watershed management through eliminating vulnerabilities in a system.

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