

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

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Washington D.C., 20001
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Dear Chairman Wicker,

On behalf of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), I want to thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving our nation's infrastructure. We applaud and offer our support to your legislation, the Rural Infrastructure Advancement Act, which establishes a Rural Assistance Pilot Program to help rural communities and localities better utilize and leverage existing US Department of Transportation (DOT) funding and financing opportunities.

In ASCE's 2017 Infrastructure Report Card, our nation's roads, bridges, and transit received the grades of "C+" and "D," respectively. These poor grades reflect that 46,154, or 7.5%, of the nation's bridges in 2019 are structurally deficient and one out of every five miles of highway pavement is in poor condition. These alarming statistics are felt in all communities across the nation, including rural America. Simply put, key surface transportation infrastructure is crumbling, and strong leadership is needed to improve our safety and increase our economic competitiveness.

By establishing the Rural Assistance Pilot Program within DOT's Build America Bureau, this legislation will help by providing financial, technical, and legal assistance to potential rural project sponsors seeking to apply for a loan or grant. Rural communities through this program will be better prepared to rebuild critical infrastructure and support economic growth.

Thank you for your leadership and support of this critical issue. We look forward to working with you as this legislation works its way through Congress.

Sincerely,



K.N. Gunalan, Ph.D, P.E., D.GE, F.ASCE
ASCE President 2020