



CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Recommendations

November 2025

The BlueGreen Alliance (BGA) is a unique and enduring coalition that leverages the collective strength of its partners and their members to build consensus and advocate for shared solutions that fight the climate crisis, create good-paying, union jobs, advance racial and economic justice, and protect the health and fundamental rights of working people. BGA unifies its members into a powerful voice for a clean, thriving, and equitable economy. The BlueGreen Alliance strongly supports efforts to rebuild and modernize America's transportation infrastructure through a 2026 surface transportation reauthorization agenda that prioritizes both workers and the climate. Surface transportation reauthorization provides a unique opportunity to boost the economy, create millions of jobs, enhance resilience, and better protect our communities from harmful pollution. As both chambers build their legislation this session, we urge Congress to craft a package that will:

- **Safeguard investments made in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).** Maintain the funding commitments in the BIL as a baseline for surface transportation reauthorization moving forward. The BIL delivered significant benefits for workers and climate with historic investments in American infrastructure.¹ The BIL supported the creation of thousands of union jobs in construction, manufacturing, and clean energy. At the same time, the law provides funds for transportation and infrastructure upgrades that improve air and water quality, reduce harmful emissions, and increase resiliency from extreme weather events. It is vital that this level of funding remains a baseline for future work.
- **Enforce the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA).** BABA requirements must be maintained and enforced to ensure taxpayer funded infrastructure projects grow domestic manufacturing, build more stable supply chains, and support good-paying American jobs.
- **Establish a proactive worker-centered regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles with standards that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are empowered and appropriately resourced to enforce.** Establish an enforceable federal framework that ensures new technologies onboard public transportation equipment meet existing safety and operational standards and ensures qualified operators are present on all vehicles used for public transportation. Provide resources and training on new technologies for workers and require recipients of federal grants to submit workforce development plans. Include requirements for Operational Design Domains (ODD) and prohibit autonomous vehicles from operating in an ODD for which it has not been approved.

Limit the number of autonomous vehicles that are sold and deployed to ensure a safe and measured phase-in for new technologies. Congress should also work with states and localities to preserve their authority to protect the health and welfare of their residents. Federal legislation should not preempt states and localities from implementing policies and safeguards in accordance with the Clean Air Act or other federal law.

The Department of Transportation's Intelligent Transportation Systems Program Advisory Committee should also include a dedicated seat for labor organizations.

- **Invest in the adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (MHDV), including funding programs that enable the federal government, states, and localities to purchase and deploy domestically manufactured electric municipal and school buses.** Invest significantly in the adoption of domestically manufactured and assembled zero-emission MHDVs and in MHDV infrastructure, including at ports. Provide grants and technical assistance for zero-emission fleets and infrastructure. Ensure these programs are deployed under conditions that uphold fair labor standards, ensure community engagement and community benefit, and discourage exploitative business models.

Clean technology deployment in the commercial trucking sector can provide major health, air quality, and environmental benefits to local communities. Investments should prioritize domestic manufacturing and air quality improvement in communities where improvement is most needed.

EPA's Clean School Bus program and the FTA's Low and No Emission Grant Program are both critical to improving air quality and transportation services in communities across America, and both programs should be reauthorized with funding maintained.

- **Fund electrification and build reliable charging networks.** Reauthorize and revitalize the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program and the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant program and expand the national charging network through targeted investments, strategic reform, and enhanced technical assistance to ensure all communities have access. Assist in the development and deployment of complementary charging solutions, including battery swapping for fleets and wireless charging. To the greatest extent reasonably feasible, require domestic procurement for charging infrastructure projects and domestic supply chains for fast charging technologies.
- **Improve transit operations and create a federal program for transit operations funding.** Create a program that would allow the federal government to provide operating support to transit agencies for day-to-day expenses such as driver pay, security, and transit maintenance. Congress should authorize at least \$20 billion each year to increase and improve transit services.

Congress should support increased public transportation for low-income and underserved communities to improve access to employment, education, healthcare, parks, and public lands.

- **Invest in battery reuse and second life applications to maximize the lifespan of products containing critical minerals and improve grid resilience.** Reauthorize BIL Section 40112 “Demonstration of Electric Vehicle Battery Second-Life Applications for Grid Services,” Section 40207 “Battery processing and manufacturing,” and Section 40208 “Electric drive vehicle battery recycling and second-life applications program.” Additionally, consider creating a refurbished battery standard to ensure consistency in refurbished batteries and further maximize the value of each battery.
- **Collect data on mineral recovery rates for battery recycling.** Direct EPA to collect data about mineral recovery rates from U.S. lithium-ion battery and black mass recyclers and explore options to increase recovery rates.
- **Invest in advanced battery technologies.** Advanced or “next-generation” battery technologies can mitigate reliance on critical minerals by improving energy density—which enables batteries to achieve the same or better performance with less material—and by developing battery chemistries that rely on non-critical materials, such as sodium-ion. These advancements can reduce the United States’ exposure to global supply chains and create more resilient technologies domestically. Include research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) to develop and commercialize domestically sourced next-generation battery technologies.
- **Support safe and efficient transportation for retired lithium-ion batteries.** Support and fund innovative RD&D projects that improve battery transportation safety and efficiency, including methods for preventing fire and thermal runaway events, and cost-effective measures to safely transport batteries.
- **Stabilize the Highway Trust Fund (HTF).** Stabilize the HTF by implementing user-based revenue sources, such as an increase in the gas tax and an equivalent fee for drivers of electric vehicles. Electric vehicles drivers should pay an equitable contribution to the HTF in parity with drivers of vehicles with internal combustion engines. In states where electric vehicle drivers already pay electric vehicle user fees at registration or annually, the federal fee should be waived or reduced to ensure parity.
- **Require federally funded infrastructure to adhere to the Davis-Bacon Act requirements and incentivize project labor agreements (PLAs).** These provisions must be maintained for the duration of the project and coupled with clear implementation and oversight to ensure that taxpayer funded infrastructure projects are built by workers with proper qualifications under safe and fair conditions.

Compliance with Davis-Bacon is essential for promoting fair compensation and high-quality work in the construction industry. PLAs ensure high-road labor standards and

timely project completion by providing project owners with access to the safest, most productive, and best-trained construction workers available in any given market.

- **Increase investment in registered apprenticeships and apprenticeship readiness programs.** Congress should require or incentivize the use of labor-management training programs, registered apprenticeships, and quality pre-apprenticeship programs to ensure workers have the skills and support they need to succeed.
- **Affirm that workers can exercise their right to organize and engage in collective bargaining.** The right to organize is an important tool for promoting workers' rights, improving wages and working conditions, and ensuring greater economic and social justice. Congress should require that recipients of federal dollars remain neutral in union organizing drives, recognize a union once a majority of employees have signed authorization cards, and agree to a first contract within a reasonable period.
- **Maintain the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program.** The PROTECT Program provides important flexible resources to support states and localities in ensuring that surface transportation assets can withstand flooding, extreme weather, and other natural disasters through resources for planning, resilience improvements to existing assets, community resilience and evacuation route needs, and at-risk coastal infrastructure. BGA supports the full reauthorization of the PROTECT Program—including both formula and discretionary grants—to support natural disaster planning and resilience of transportation infrastructure.
- **Fund research and development programs for innovative transportation materials.** Include research and development funding that provides opportunities for the United States to lead in resilient and innovative transportation materials. Research, development, and demonstration programs for transportation materials, like cement and steel, can help spur manufacturing technology breakthroughs to help cut costs for state and local governments while increasing resilience to extreme weather events. The bipartisan Concrete and Asphalt Innovation (CAIA) Act of 2025 alongside the Innovative Mitigation Partnerships for Asphalt and Concrete Technologies (IMPACT) Act would establish research and development programs for production of low-emissions cement in collaboration with industry partners.
- **Authorize states to engage in advance purchase commitments for innovative, low-emissions, high-performance materials.** Advanced purchase commitments (APCs) allow states to guarantee direct purchase of innovative materials, even if such materials are not yet on the market. American manufacturers and State DOTs alike benefit from advance multi-year contracts that de-risk investments in scaling up production, create market certainty, and bring domestically sourced innovative materials to the transportation sector faster. Authorize APCs as proposed in both the CAIA and the IMPACT Act 2.0.

- **Continue to fund American industrial demonstrations.** Restore funding for industrial emissions demonstration projects to strengthen the economic competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers in innovative new technologies and processes to reduce emissions and increase efficiency.
- **Preference low-carbon, high-performance materials in non-highway infrastructure.** From charging stations to rail, Surface Transportation touches many sectors critical to creating demand for innovative and low-carbon materials such as cement, aluminum, and steel. Support the purchase of American-made clean, renewable, and emission-free energy products for federal, state, and local use and establish grant funding for U.S. companies to invest in clean energy manufacturing here at home.

In addition to the priorities outlined above, strengthening and funding the **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)** must remain a top priority and could be advanced through the surface transportation bill. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers latest infrastructure report card, America’s stormwater infrastructure is currently graded D, and wastewater infrastructure D+.ii Overall, 2025 saw a notable improvement in infrastructure assessment scoring because of BIL investments in repair, but storm and wastewater infrastructure remains among the lowest ranked. It is imperative that the Clean Water State Revolving Fund funding levels increase or remain at FY 2025 levels. The financial damage to communities responding to the harm of heavy rainfall far outweighs the costs of preventive measures that support municipalities’ ability to plan, design, and implement solutions to protect communities.

Investments in surface transportation provide an enormous opportunity, not only to improve and modernize our national infrastructure, but also to create good jobs, build a cleaner economy, and better serve our communities. We look forward to working with the committees of jurisdiction in your respective bodies as you craft this reauthorization.

Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Infrastructure Investment in the United States.
<https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/infrastructure-investment-in-the-united-states>

ⁱⁱ American Society of Civil Engineers, 2025 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure.
<https://infrastructurereportcard.org>