

Issue brief

The American Institute of Architects

Include buildings in federal infrastructure investment

THE PROBLEM

The nation's public building stock needs significant investment to meet 21st century demands.

THE ASK

AIA urges Congress to include funding for buildings in any federal infrastructure package.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Building infrastructure investment must be included in any infrastructure legislation. Horizontal infrastructure (including roads, bridges, and waterways) and building infrastructure (including schools, hospitals, civic centers, and affordable housing) are two sides of the same coin. Both are critically important to our nation's economy and both are in need of significant investment.

The American public and the federal government have long recognized the important role that buildings play in our nation's infrastructure:

Public Opinion:

- 82% of Americans agree that public buildings are as important as transportation in defining community infrastructureⁱ
- 91% of all voters consider stable affordable housing "highly important" to people's security and well-beingⁱⁱ
- 75% of Gallup Poll respondents agree that the federal government should spend more to improve infrastructure, including buildingsⁱⁱⁱ
- 70% of Americans agree that public schools should be considered part of America's infrastructure^{iv}

Federal Government:

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) includes buildings as a component of critical infrastructure^v
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) includes schools and hospitals as U.S. infrastructure^{vi}
- The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) includes a variety of buildings within the Government Facilities Sector that are considered a Critical Infrastructure Sector^{vii}

The Solution:

Congress should ensure that any comprehensive federal infrastructure package includes at least \$300 billion for building infrastructure. To best leverage this investment for decades to come, Congress must promote energy-efficient and resilient building practices. Specifically, Congress should incentivize building code adoption at the state and local level for new construction projects, and encourage the adoption of stretch codes like the IECC 2021 ZERO Code Renewable Energy Appendix. Doing so will lower energy bills for taxpayers and the government alike and produce well-paying jobs for many Americans.

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Citations:

ⁱ American Institute of Architecture (AIA), “Build America Summit Report,” <https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-11/Build%20America%20Summit%20Public%20Opinion%20Poll%20Results.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Opportunity Starts at Home, “A Call to Action on Housing Amid COVID-19,” <https://www.opportunityhome.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/E-12915-Housing-Affordability-002.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Frank Newport, Gallup News, “Americans Say ‘Yes’ to Spending More on VA, Infrastructure,” <https://news.gallup.com/poll/190136/americans-say-yes-spending-infrastructure.aspx>

^{iv} Morning Consult and Politico, National Tracking Poll 210449, <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000178-cfbd-d112-a97e-ffbde6ef0000>

^v Department of Homeland Security (DHS), “Critical Infrastructure,” <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/critical-infrastructure>

^{vi} Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Strategic Foresight Initiative, “Critical Infrastructure,” https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/programs/oppa/critical_infrastructure_paper.pdf

^{vii} Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Critical Infrastructure Sectors, “Government Facilities Sector,” <https://www.cisa.gov/government-facilities-sector>