

March 30, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of our millions of members nationwide, we write to commend you for your past support of green infrastructure measures and to ask that you support the robust funding of green infrastructure initiatives as a part of the nation's recovery from COVID-19.

As you work to address the economic impacts of the pandemic, the large-scale funding of green infrastructure projects presents an opportunity to get Americans back to work, while simultaneously improving the communities that they live in.

This moment also gives us the chance to target funding towards the low-income communities and communities of color that have been disproportionately impacted by extreme weather and chronic flooding due to historical levels of underinvestment and disinvestment. This pattern of underfunding has, not coincidentally, led to these same communities experiencing disproportionately adverse outcomes to their health and their economic standing during the pandemic.

We ask you to support the passage of legislation which generally:

- Requires that federal investments provide substantial, long-term benefits to the public and the economy;
- Takes into account the cost of a project over its entire life span – including designing, building, operating, and maintaining the infrastructure – and specifically takes into account projected future climate impacts and necessary resiliency;
- Leverages state, local, and private investment, and does not replace these other critical sources of infrastructure funding;
- Improves land use planning and specifically green infrastructure planning at the local level to include consideration of the function of existing and new infrastructure, the balance between the built and natural environments, and population trends in communities of all sizes, now and into the future;
- Ensures that all infrastructure funding prioritizes resilient and nature-based solutions – when cost-effective over the lifespan of the project - such as building parks for buffer zones, restoring wetlands, building rain gardens, and installing permeable roads and sidewalks, and that new projects and repairs do not increase stormwater runoff to surrounding waterways or wetlands; and
- Supports research and development into innovative new green infrastructure materials, technologies, and processes to modernize and extend the life of infrastructure, expedite repairs or replacement, and promote cost savings.

We also urge you to support the following specific policy recommendations:

- Department of Interior
 - Fund a historic, one-time \$500 million local park investment, with a priority on underserved communities;
- Department of Homeland Security
 - Fund FEMA’s Resilience Revolving Loan Fund at \$200 million, which was authorized in the STORM Act signed into law on Jan 1, 2021;
 - Fund FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program at \$8.7 billion over 5 years, which will fund non-structural flood mitigation projects and resilient infrastructure and fund a technical assistance program for small communities to better access this funding;
- Environmental Protection Agency
 - Fund the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds at \$100 billion over five years, split evenly between the two SRFs, with at least 20 percent of CWSRF funding set-aside for investing in green infrastructure projects;
 - Fund EPA’s Wetlands Program Development Grants at \$20 million/year, targeted specifically for wetlands restoration and rebuilding to protect communities against flooding and other natural disasters and filter drinking water while also creating jobs;
- Department of Agriculture
 - Increase funding for USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program up to \$7 billion/year by 2024, including \$200 million/year for Conservation Innovation Grants;
 - Increase funding for USDA’s Conservation Stewardship Program up to \$7 billion/year by 2024;
 - Enroll 40 million acres of marginal land through the USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program by 2030, with a greater focus on acres devoted to water quality practices like streamside buffers;
 - Increase funding for USDA’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program to \$1 billion a year;
 - Increase funding for USDA’s Agricultural Conservation Easement Program up to \$1.5 billion/year by 2024;
- Department of Transportation
 - Establish a Pre-Disaster Infrastructure Program for Transportation and encourage green infrastructure as one solution;
 - Adopt the Resilience Provisions within the America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Ensure compliance with green infrastructure priorities especially at the Army Corps of Engineers;
- General Services Administration
 - Support the greening of federal buildings including courthouses and other federal buildings as well as any buildings that receive federal funding, like schools and public housing.

We commend your boldness and vision regarding the implementation of green infrastructure provisions to help mitigate against flooding and improve cities, towns, and rural communities across the U.S. We stand ready to work with your administration and congressional leadership to advance these priorities in COVID-19 recovery legislation.

Thank you,

American Institute of Architects

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Planning Association

American Society of Landscape Architects

City Parks Alliance

The Conservation Fund

Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

National Municipal Stormwater Alliance

National Recreation and Park Association

Southern Environmental Law Center

The Trust for Public Land

U.S. Green Building Council

Water Environment Federation

Cc: Secretary Deb Haaland, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Administrator Michael Regan, Secretary Tom Vilsack, Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Acting Secretary John Whitney, and Acting Administrator Katy Kale.