

# National Policy on Transportation

We are well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but American transportation is still rooted firmly in the 20<sup>th</sup>. Lack of investment in our highways, transit and rail infrastructure threatens our economy and limits employment potential. We spend more than \$1 billion a day on foreign oil, and overall, transportation accounts for two out of every three barrels of oil we burn and produces nearly a third of our greenhouse gas pollution.

Investing in American-made cleaner vehicles, roads, bridges, tunnels, rail, transit, and better biking and walking can create millions of jobs in infrastructure, manufacturing, and operations. We need cleaner, safer, more efficient transportation to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system that assures America remains the world's leading global competitive economy, reduces pollution and our dependence on foreign oil, and creates new jobs and opportunity for workers across the nation.

America has several opportunities to move our transportation systems into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The legislative and executive branches are working now on a number of initiatives, such as the transportation reauthorization bill, vehicle fuel efficiency standards, and a host of rail, freight, port and sustainable community endeavors to modernize American transportation. We need networks that have the capacity to meet the demands of an economy that is increasingly dependent upon “just in time” delivery and moves people and goods more efficiently, while at the same time increasing our energy independence, protecting our environment, and creating good, green jobs.

A forward-looking, comprehensive transportation policy should:

## Modernize Transportation Infrastructure and Make It More Efficient

According to the Federal Highway Administration, one out of every four of the nation's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, nearly a quarter of the nation's bus and rail infrastructure is in marginal or poor condition and more than half of the miles driven on federal highways are on roads that are in less than good condition. We must modernize our highway, rail and transit networks and

ensure they are safe, in good repair, and more efficient. Maintenance and repair alone will not optimize efficiency or provide the energy savings we need. We need more and more efficient capacity to make our economy more productive.

## Make Our Transportation Networks Greener

Investing in transit, rail, high-speed rail, and biking and walking infrastructure will reduce congestion, saving oil and time. Rural areas will also benefit from rail and transit investment through better-linked communities, reduced sprawl, and better access to employment and economic development. Investing in public transportation will also create new markets for American-made transit and rail vehicles, as proposed in the Transportation Manufacturing Action Plan crafted by the Apollo Alliance and BlueGreen Alliance.

## Support Flexibility for Transit Operating Assistance

Gas prices are volatile and rising. Transit systems that have been hobbled by insufficient state and local tax revenues during the recent economic recession will see rising ridership as the economy gets stronger and fuel costs cut further into working people's paychecks. Many will be forced to shut down, lay off workers, raise fares, or reduce service, leaving more low-income people without a ride to work and jeopardizing the viability of a transportation mode that also saves billions of gallons of fuel each year.

Federal transit operating assistance puts people — transit employees and transit-dependent individuals — back to work quickly and gets them to work efficiently. Transportation investments should support day-to-day transit operations to preserve and create quality

jobs, ensure millions of working Americans are able to get to work affordably and reliably, and reduce pollution and dependence on foreign oil.

### Build Cleaner Cars and Trucks Here In America

We support the Obama administration's efforts to set light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicle standards that improve fuel efficiency, cut America's oil dependence, and reduce greenhouse gas pollution to the highest degree technically and economically feasible. By developing and producing advanced fuel-saving technologies in the U.S., automakers and the domestic auto supply chain can create quality jobs and supply the efficient cars and light trucks demanded in the marketplace. As these industries retool, there is also a need to support the automotive sector in their efforts to modernize their facilities and preserve and create jobs as they rebuild to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

As America transitions to a cleaner fleet featuring more hybrid and electric vehicles, we also need to invest in the electrification infrastructure that will increase market acceptance of advanced vehicles. This will create infrastructure employment, encourage advanced technologies, and complement efforts to modernize our electric grid. In addition, we need to support efforts to develop and manufacture advanced vehicles and complementary technologies here in America.

### Support Cleaner Ports and Freight

Eighty-seven million Americans live and work near ports that violate federal air quality standards, resulting in much higher rates and risk of asthma, cancer, and respiratory illnesses. More than 100,000 U.S. port truck drivers toil every day in dirty diesel rigs and effectively earn less than federal or state minimum wages. Many are without health insurance, and are misclassified as independent contractors, making them exempt from almost all legal protections for employees, including the right to form a union.

However, greening our ports and cleaning up our environment is not a burden that should fall on truck drivers already suffering under low wages and deplorable working conditions. We need to empower, but not mandate, local ports to adopt requirements for motor carriers and

vehicles that are reasonably related to the reduction of environmental pollution, traffic congestion, improving highway safety, and the efficient utilization of port facilities.

In addition, we need to strive for a multi-modal network for shipping freight that balances cleaner trucking and the advantage of rail, and support efforts to modernize freight systems and rail infrastructure, which will create quality employment and complement efforts to strengthen the industrial and manufacturing sectors of the economy.

### Create Quality U.S. Jobs In Transportation

We must ensure that the jobs that are created through transportation investments are created here in the U.S. and are good paying, quality jobs. We can create more high-road jobs here in America by including Davis-Bacon wage protections in transportation-related legislation.

We should also ensure that domestic sourcing provisions are included in the Transportation Reauthorization bill and other infrastructure policies as recommended in our Transportation Manufacturing Action Plan, a joint project among labor, business and environmentalists to ensure we're maximizing the employment, energy and environmental impacts of our transportation investments. Investment in transit, rail, and cleaner vehicles creates jobs for Americans who build trains, buses, cleaner cars and trucks and their component parts. From seats to windows to doors to motorcoaches to train cars, the manufacture of vehicles and parts represent important supply chains across the nation. Buy America provisions in transportation spending will ensure these good wage jobs are created here in the United States.

An overhaul of our nation's transportation system is long overdue. The system is broken, and broke — in addition to improving our infrastructure, we also need to create sustainable revenue sources to fund needed investments. The BlueGreen Alliance and our partners support investments to build cleaner, modern transportation systems to give Americans more mobility, make our economy more productive, create jobs, increase our energy independence, and reduce pollution.



The BlueGreen Alliance is a national, strategic partnership between labor unions and environmental organizations dedicated to expanding the number and quality of jobs in the green economy.

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