



TRANSPORTATION FACT SHEET

An aging, increasingly diverse and highly transportation-reliant rural America plays a vital role in the U.S. as home to 60 million Americans, much of its natural resources and the country's primary source of energy, food and fiber. These economic sectors are highly dependent on the quality of its transportation system, particularly roads, highways, bridges and waterways, which provide the first and last link in the chain from farm to market.

Rural Roads and Bridges

The roads and bridges that serve and connect the country's rural areas face a number of significant challenges, including inadequate capacity to handle the growing levels of traffic and commerce, limited connectivity, the inability to adequately accommodate growing freight travel, deteriorated road and bridge conditions, and a traffic fatality rate far higher than all other roads and highways.

The nation's rural roads and bridges have significant deficiencies as a result of underfunding. Fifteen percent of the nation's major rural roads have pavements rated in poor condition and another 21 percent are rated in mediocre condition. Ten percent of the nation's rural bridges are rated structurally deficient.

In order to ensure rural Americans have access to safe bridges and roadways, the RebuildRural Coalition asks for an increase in federal transportation funding and a recognition of the unique needs that rural roads and bridges present to ensure they are eligible for federal grants and funding. State, local, rural and agricultural stakeholders should also have the ability to prioritize federal funds so that they best meet the needs of their communities.

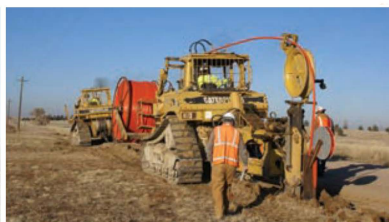
Waterways

Agriculture and other rural businesses depend on transportation infrastructure to get their products to consumers both in the U.S. and around the world. The inland waterways system provides the lowest-cost, most fuel-efficient and most environmentally friendly way to transport products. Exports of agricultural goods are an important part of our economy, making up 20 percent of farm income and supporting more than one million jobs. Seventy-two percent of U.S. agricultural exports, valued at \$128 billion, are waterborne, and every \$1 billion in U.S. exports shipped through ports supports 15,000 U.S. jobs.

Our nation's lock and dam system is in urgent need of maintenance and modernization. Most locks and dams were built in the 1920s and '30s and have far exceeded their 50-year design lifespan. In the past decade, there has been a 700 percent increase in unscheduled stoppages for repairs.

The inland waterways system currently benefits from a successful public-private partnership, with commercial users paying 50 percent of the cost of inland waterway construction and major rehabilitation projects through a 29-cent-per-gallon diesel fuel tax paid into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, paired with matching federal funds. In fact, commercial users are the only private entities that pay into this trust fund, even though the benefits are enjoyed freely by numerous others.

The RebuildRural Coalition believes that a priority should be placed on funding the backlog of 25 critical inland waterways projects, an \$8.75 billion total federal investment. In addition, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund's current \$9 billion surplus should be unlocked to use for dredging and other waterway maintenance. Including these projects in an infrastructure package, as well as funding for rural roads and bridges, would provide a dedicated, predictable funding stream that allows projects to be completed in the most timely and cost-effective manner possible.



REBUILD RURAL COALITION

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