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National Taxpayers Union urges all Representatives to vote “NO” on H.R. 2, the “Moving Forward Act of 2020.” This legislation continues the practice of large deficit spending, totaling \$1.5 trillion over five years on infrastructure. Instead, Congress should examine common sense bipartisan solutions, such as regulatory reforms, new funding mechanisms, and efficient spending to improve our country’s infrastructure.

NTU supports congressional efforts to rebuild and modernize transportation structures, encourage private-sector investment in broadband, and improve overall infrastructure. However, NTU is skeptical that the 2,300 page proposal will achieve its intended outcome. Not only does the proposed legislation balloon spending during a time of extreme fiscal uncertainty, it raids the Highway Trust Fund in order to finance projects unrelated to highways. Most notably, it authorizes \$100 billion for housing, and billions more in spending on “green” initiatives such as subsidizing electric-vehicle charging stations, handouts to states for reducing carbon emissions, mass transit, and increased funding for walking and bicycling paths. Given the recent impact of COVID-19 on government revenue, it is in no way prudent for the government to try and appropriate money to fund quasi Green New Deal programs.

H.R. 2 also doubles down on costly regulations and fails to address the underlying inefficiencies of expensive government mandates. Instead of identifying rules and regulations that artificially increase costs for projects with federal funding, H.R. 2 includes many provisions that increase these federal burdens. For example, proposed regulations targeting the freight rail industry, such as a ban on the railway transport of liquified natural gas over rail and two-crew mandates, will only increase costs on shippers and consumers. In addition the bill triples funding for the government-run rail company, Amtrak, to \$29 billion, which has been consistently unprofitable since its inception.

Instead of prioritizing reforms to how our government spends money, H.R. 2 simply pours more tax dollars into the problem. For instance, 25-percent of gas tax revenue is diverted to non-highway projects, which this bill fails to reform. Additionally, H.R. 2 fails to address Project Labor Agreements and Davis-Bacon mandates, which result in significantly higher labor costs and punish non-union workers. Taxpayers will also be on the hook for higher construction costs as a result of greater “Buy American” requirements on federal projects

In short, the Moving Forward Act is the classic Washington approach to problem-solving: Shovel massive amounts of taxpayer dollars at a problem without addressing the structural issues that cause the problem.

Roll call votes on H.R. 2 will be heavily weighted in NTU’s annual Rating of Congress and a “NO” vote will be considered the pro-taxpayer position.

If you have any questions, please contact NTU Policy and Government Affairs Manager Thomas Aiello at Thomas.Aiello@ntu.org