



June 29, 2021

National Taxpayers Union urges all Representatives to vote “NO” on H.R. 3684, the “INVEST in America Act.” This surface transportation reauthorization legislation continues the practice of large deficit spending, totaling \$715 billion over a period of 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. Ensuring Congress enacts a long-term surface transportation reauthorization prior to its coming expiration at the end of the fiscal year is critical and would provide the certainty of federal commitment to infrastructure projects. However, NTU is skeptical that this 1,200 page proposal will achieve its intended outcome. Simply adding hundreds of billions of dollars in spending, as this legislation proposes, to the national debt without regulatory reform, proper oversight, and careful prioritization is financially unsustainable and irresponsible. Additionally, such spending will only further metastasize a bureaucratic, federally-driven process that has plagued Washington for decades.

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 billions of dollars for costly, wasteful earmarks 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. 3684 also doubles down on costly regulations and fails to address the underlying inefficiencies of expensive government mandates. 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, which has been consistently unprofitable since its inception, to \$32 billion. The best way to revitalize the United States’s infrastructure and modernize the transportation system isn’t simply spending taxpayer dollars, but also streamlining the process to make building more efficient and less expensive without sacrificing safety. That means enacting NEPA reforms, procurement reforms, labor reforms, and revenue reforms. This approach would modernize and expand our nation’s infrastructure so that more projects come online faster and cheaper -- which means a better deal for taxpayers, infrastructure users, and builders.

In short, the INVEST in America 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. 3684 will be included 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 Director of Federal Affairs Thomas Aiello at Thomas.Aiello@ntu.org