

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 110

BY REPRESENTATIVES JAMES, BRASS, TERRY BROWN, FRANKLIN, GISCLAIR,
HALL, HOWARD, TERRY LANDRY, MARCELLE, AND PIERRE

A RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress to pass legislation that supports efforts to build, modernize, and maintain the United States' infrastructure with consideration of certain principles.

WHEREAS, a country's infrastructure is the bedrock of its economy; and

WHEREAS, the traditional system of roads, bridges, railroads, waterways, and pipelines, commonly referred to as infrastructure, affects a country's ability to produce goods, deliver services and products, and connect a workforce to jobs; and

WHEREAS, the strength and efficiency of a nation's infrastructure have a direct impact on that nation as a global economic competitor and leader; and

WHEREAS, on a local level, infrastructure also affects a state's ability to participate and thrive in the nation's economy; and

WHEREAS, with an inadequate infrastructure, a state struggles to move its people and goods throughout the state and across state lines; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana currently has a more than thirteen billion dollar backlog for sorely needed road and bridge work throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, identifying funding and generating revenue to address the state's backlog have been looming problems for many years; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) evaluated and studied eleven major components of Louisiana's infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, after its evaluations, the Louisiana section of the ASCE, in its 2017 Louisiana Infrastructure Report Card, determined that, "Our infrastructure is poorly maintained, inadequately funded, and not designed to meet tomorrow's demands.

Consequently, the state is at a disadvantage and will continue to lose its economic competitiveness."; and

WHEREAS, the ASCE has given the state of Louisiana a statewide average grade of "D+" for its infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the United States' infrastructure also suffers from years of deterioration and neglect; and

WHEREAS, for decades, the United States has failed to develop means to finance infrastructure projects to keep pace with the needs of the country; and

WHEREAS, choosing to defer repairs, maintenance, and upgrades to the country's infrastructure has delivered a crippling blow to the nation's economy and growth; and

WHEREAS, the United States also received a cumulative grade of "D+" from the ASCE, showing a drop in grades for three categories: parks, solid waste, and transit; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing and consistent decline of the country's infrastructure jeopardizes the United States' ability to remain competitive in the global market; and

WHEREAS, the United States now faces serious challenges as it seeks to address pitfalls including having to prioritize badly needed projects with insufficient funding; and

WHEREAS, through a combination of federal and nonfederal funding, President Donald Trump has set a one trillion dollar infrastructure investment as his target; and

WHEREAS, the president has outlined the following four key principles as the basis for his proposal:

(1) Make targeted federal investments.

(2) Encourage self-help.

(3) Align infrastructure investment with entities best suited to provide sustained and efficient investment.

(4) Leverage the private sector; and

WHEREAS, while the United States Congress will be faced with the decision to enact the president's plan or propose its own, choosing to do nothing is not a viable option; and

WHEREAS, since the United States Congress must act, it should do so with an eye toward responsibility, innovation, and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, it is vitally important that congress consider new and creative plans to design and implement an infrastructure network that reaches every state, serves every demographic, increases employment, and moves the United States of America into the twenty-first century to rightfully regain its position as a global economic leader; and

WHEREAS, such plans must include a comprehensive approach to the nontraditional and ever-changing needs of the nation's people, businesses, and technology.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to pass legislation that supports efforts to build, modernize, and maintain the nation's infrastructure with consideration for the following principles:

(1) Redefining infrastructure. A twenty-first century economy demands a broader, more inclusive definition to ensure that the country is fully considering all of its infrastructure needs. A newer definition should be expanded to include the following:

- (a) Energy-efficient housing.
- (b) Broadband.
- (c) Education facilities, including access to traditional universities and community colleges, as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- (d) Forest roads, sidewalks, and bike trails.
- (e) Parks.
- (f) Waste removal and treatment.
- (g) Programs connecting seniors to the rest of the economy.

(2) Committing to fund job training and workforce development. Provisions must focus on enabling young workers and urban residents to benefit from any infrastructure plan through training, pre-apprenticeships, and related approaches, including Registered Apprenticeships within the telecommunications and technology sectors. It must promote meaningful skills development, technical training, internships, and job placement opportunities for African Americans and urban community members. This must be fully integrated into any proposal. Without this, the benefits will not be broadly and fairly shared.

(3) Empowering minority contractors. Minority contractors should have the opportunity to rebuild their communities and employ hardworking Americans along the way. Infrastructure investments should be disseminated through a transparent procurement

process with aggressive contracting goals for disadvantaged business entities and effective enforcement to root out fraudulent firms. Contractors and subcontractors should have the ability to employ local hiring preferences and subcontractors should receive prompt payment when services are rendered.

(4) Promoting inclusiveness. Infrastructure development and planning should be inclusive of underserved segments of the population, such as poor, rural, and elderly communities. A twenty-first century economy should not exclude any individuals from participation on the basis of demographics, geography, or financial means. By ensuring participation from all individuals, this country can provide equal opportunity for each and every American to contribute in meaningful ways to the economy and the communities in which they live.

(5) Building for resilience. Climate change and the volatility that are associated with extreme weather events are only expected to worsen over time. More intense storms, sea level rise, storm surges, and other unusual weather conditions are placing an immense strain on the nation's infrastructure and the limited resources that it has to build and maintain it. As the country plans for the future and conceptualizes how it will build up its infrastructure, it needs to consider the long-term viability of these projects and their resilience to extreme weather.

(6) Multi-modal transportation planning. A robust transportation network must consider the changing demographics of its users and the subsequent changes in demand. Conventional transportation planning relies heavily on motor vehicle traffic. However, many communities - particularly in urban areas - must now consider pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders, ridesharing, and other users when evaluating the effectiveness of the transportation ecosystem.

(7) Future-proofing. The development and adoption of autonomous vehicles, positive train control, NextGen, Smart City planning, and other technologies and transportation models are vastly altering the way the country conceptualizes, plans, and executes transportation policy. The unique challenges that the nation faces will only grow increasingly more complex as the population grows and the nature of its infrastructure becomes more interconnected. An infrastructure package must not only address the

immediate needs of the country's crumbling system, but also anticipate the needs of a generation to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES