

July 1st, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman of the Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas Carper
Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of the over 400-member companies of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), I welcome today's hearing, titled "*Better, Faster, Cheaper, Smarter and Stronger: Infrastructure Development Opportunities to Drive Economic Recovery and Resiliency.*" Infrastructure investment is the most effective legislative means to combat the economic impacts of the pandemic, put hundreds of thousands of Americans back to work and grow our national economic competitiveness.

NSSGA is the leading advocate and resource for the aggregates industry, who provide the critical raw materials found in virtually every surface transportation project; roads, highways, bridges, runways, pipelines and much more. Our membership represents more than 90 percent of the crushed stone and 70 percent of the sand and gravel produced annually in the United States. The significant economic impacts all Americans have experienced since the onset of the pandemic has led Congress to pass the largest recovery and economic packages we've seen in recent times. Yet, Congress has not addressed federal infrastructure investment, despite its historical bi-partisan support and incredible economic record of leveraging federal dollars with real local impacts. Your committee understands this position well, through the unanimous passage of the *America's Transportation and Infrastructure Act* (ATIA) last year and passage of *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020* (AIWA) this past May. The House is taking up their highway reauthorization – *Investing in a New Vision For The Environment And Surface Transportation* (INVEST) *In America Act* – within the larger *Moving America Forward Act* (HR 2) package that will be debated on the House floor this week, and NSSGA supports continued advancement of infrastructure policy.

A recent study by the National League of Cities found more than 700 cities across the country have halted projects that would improve roads, buy equipment and complete other much needed public works projects, including water systems. These are projects vital to the economic health of our nation and the states, cities and communities that comprise it. We feel today's hearing will continue dialogue that underscores what we already know – our nation cannot afford continued deferment of infrastructure investment in the face of a highway reauthorization set to expire on September 30; state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) absorbing unprecedented budget shortfalls; and the Highway Trust Fund becoming financially insolvent before 2022. We need our elected leaders to work together to ensure federal funding for the public works projects that facilitate safe travel and increase economic productivity across our communities. NSSGA recognizes the urgency that Congress must pass federal infrastructure investment and gives your committee our support.

Infrastructure investment is a critical driver of job creation, which we know firsthand as every job we create in the aggregates industry results in almost five additional jobs within the construction industry. As the critical raw supplier for virtually every public works project, the more materials our members

produce ensures the entire construction supply chain grows with more engineers, truckers, pavers, contractors, as well as purchasing and utilizing the heavy equipment necessary to quarry our rock. Long after a vaccine is implemented, our country's response to the pandemic will be judged by our economic recovery, and infrastructure investment is the best Congressional tool to ensure this objective is fulfilled.

Infrastructure investment is even more critical given the pandemic's impact interrupting previously forecasted public works projects, as state DOTs have had to absorb upwards of 30 to 45 percent in revenue declines due to "shelter in place" orders to limit the pandemic's spread. Normal driving and daily commuting are down significantly in almost every state in the union, and gas tax receipts are nowhere near their projected levels from the beginning of the year. NSSGA supports an immediate infusion of funds to support these state DOTs, as many are now suspending or canceling their lettings for this summer at the height of the construction season, impacting various public works projects that were previously budgeted to begin or continue prior to the pandemic's spread. Earlier this month, your colleague on the committee, Senator Mike Rounds, led a Dear Colleague letter to Senate leadership to advocate for state DOT support, which garnered 25 additional bi-partisan signatures¹. Ignoring the request to support state DOTs will blunt any infrastructure recovery package or highway reauthorization bill, no matter its size and scope, and will set back our country's infrastructure needs significantly. If we want to leverage infrastructure policy in order to bolster our economic recovery and ensure as many Americans get back to work, we must first address the dire financial situation with state DOTs.

I appreciate your committee's leadership, advancing sound infrastructure policies, and continuing the call for infrastructure investment. As you continue to work with your colleagues and pass a meaningful highway reauthorization bill, or other matters relevant to the aggregates industry, please consider NSSGA as a partner. Thank you again for your time and interest on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Johnson
President and CEO
National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

¹ <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/f/?id=00000172-bf01-de70-a973-ffb3a2600000>