

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2015

Dear Colleague:

As members of the Former Governors Caucus, we hope you'll join us in representing dozens of business, labor and policy groups recognizing the importance of our nation's roads, bridges, pipes and electric grid, during Infrastructure Week, which begins Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. The United States has an impressive list of infrastructure achievements to demonstrate its economic prowess, from the Erie Canal to the Interstate Highway System. Yet in a time of increasingly strained resources and budget sequestration, this bipartisan tradition of investment in infrastructure has been threatened by chronic underfunding and a patchwork system of infrastructure funding mechanisms.

The American Society of Civil Engineers recently gave the state of U.S. infrastructure a "D+" grade. By not fully funding our infrastructure networks, our families' livelihoods are jeopardized and our small businesses risk becoming less competitive. Not only are our ports, bridges, and highways failing to accommodate increased traffic, our power grids, water mains, broadband networks, and other commonplace features of everyday life are struggling to adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Failure to address these growing funding crises could cost the average American family up to \$1,000 annually, lead to nearly 900,000 jobs lost, and cause U.S. GDP to underperform by almost \$900 billion by 2020.

Similarly, the mechanisms designed to fund such capital improvements are failing our communities and our nation. As state and regional governments forge ahead with ambitious projects, our federal government remains paralyzed. Large infrastructure projects require years of planning and stability, not the short-term budget fixes that have become common in recent years. Transportation and infrastructure investment yields almost \$2 in direct and indirect economic output for every \$1 spent, yet our infrastructure decision making consistently defers this promise of future prosperity. As long as our nation's infrastructure funding is dependent on short-term electoral cycles, our national economy will suffer.

Groups across the political spectrum are calling for Congress to put politics aside to fully fund infrastructure. The economic benefits are undeniable: economists estimate that increasing the national infrastructure budget by one percent of real GDP would lead to an additional \$270 billion in economic output over a three-year period. The same one percent increase could add an additional 730,000 jobs in 2015 alone.

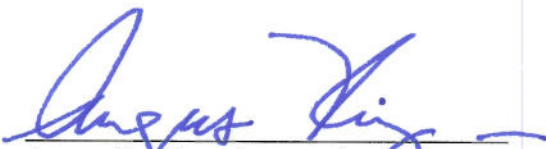
Infrastructure Week is an important reminder that we must move beyond the short-term fixes that have come to characterize recent infrastructure debates and rather work together to find comprehensive solutions that not only advance our economy but also provide our nation's

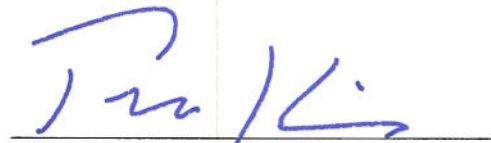
engineers, small businesses, and families the certainty they need to invest in our future. For more information of events happening during Infrastructure Week, please visit [www.infrastructureweek.org](http://www.infrastructureweek.org).

Sincerely,


  
Jeanne Shaheen

  
M. Michael Rounds

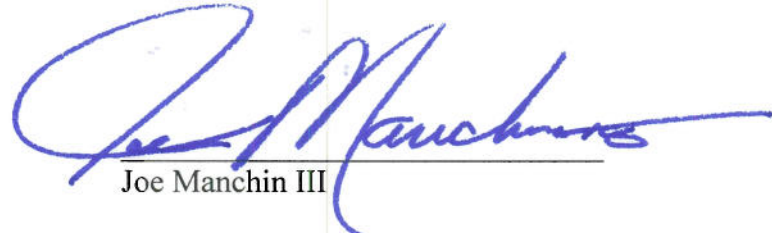
  
Angus S. King, Jr.

  
Tim Kaine

  
John Hoeven

  
Mark Warner

  
Thomas R. Carper

  
Joe Manchin III