



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
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Washington, DC 20590
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News

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Will Deliver for the United States Virgin Islands

President Biden and Vice President Harris's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is the largest long-term investment in our infrastructure and competitiveness in nearly a century. **The need for action in the U.S. Virgin Islands is clear, and recently released data demonstrates that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will deliver for the U.S. Virgin Islands.** For decades, infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands has suffered from a systemic lack of investment. The historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will make life better for hundreds of thousands of U.S. Virgin Islands residents, create a generation of good-paying union jobs and economic growth, and position the United States to win the 21st century.

Specifically, with regard to transportation, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will:

Repair and rebuild our roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians. One in five miles, or 173,000 total miles, of our highways and major roads and 45,000 bridges across the United States are in poor condition. Bridges in poor condition pose heightened challenges in communities in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which often may rely on a single bridge for the passage of emergency service vehicles. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system. **Through the Territorial Highway Program, the U.S. Virgin Islands would expect to receive approximately \$96 million over five years to rebuild its roads and bridges.** On an average annual basis, this is about 14% more than the funding the U.S. Virgin Islands receives under current law (1). The U.S. Virgin Islands can also compete for the \$15 billion of national funding in the law dedicated to megaprojects that will deliver substantial economic benefits to communities. The U.S. Virgin Islands may also apply federal aid dollars towards climate resilience and safety projects.

Improve the safety of our transportation system. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests \$13 billion over the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act levels directly into improving roadway safety. Over five years, the U.S. Virgin Islands will receive approximately \$5 million in 402 formula funding for highway safety traffic programs, which help states, tribes, and territories to improve driver behavior and reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle-related crashes. On an average annual basis, this represents about a 29% increase over FAST Act levels (2). In addition, the U.S. Virgin Islands can expect to receive approximately \$3 million over five years in funding to augment their commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety efforts to reduce CMV crashes through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety

Administration's Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) formula grant. This represents about a 70% increase in funding compared to FAST Act levels (3). The U.S. Virgin Islands will be able to apply for funds to modernize data collection systems to collect near real time data on all reported crashes, including fatal ones, to enhance safety and to allow the Department to understand and address trends as they are identified.

Improve healthy, sustainable transportation options for millions of Americans. Based on formula funding alone, the U.S. Virgin Islands would expect to receive about \$16.7 million over five years under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to improve public transportation options across the islands (4). In the first year, this represents about a 46% increase over 2021 FAST Act formula transit funding levels.

Improve our nation's airports. The United States built modern aviation, but our airports lag far behind our competitors. **Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, airports in the U.S. Virgin Islands would receive approximately \$30 million for infrastructure development for airports over five years (5).** This funding will address airside and landside needs at airports, such as improving runways, taxiways and airport-owned towers, terminal development projects, and noise reduction projects. In addition, \$5 billion in discretionary funding is available over five years for airport terminal development projects that address the aging infrastructure of our nation's airports, including projects that expand accessibility for persons with disabilities, improve access for historically disadvantaged populations, improve energy efficiency, and improve airfield safety.

State, tribal, territorial, and local governments can look forward to these new & expanded competitive grant programs in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) anticipated to launch over the course of the next year:

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants (\$15B, expanded)** – RAISE grants support surface transportation projects of local and/or regional significance.
- **Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants (\$14B, expanded)** – INFRA grants will offer needed aid to freight infrastructure by providing funding to state, tribal, territorial, and local government for projects of regional or national significance. The BIL also raises the cap on multimodal projects to 30% of program funds.
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Low and No Emission Bus Programs (\$5.6B, expanded)** – BIL expands this competitive program which provides funding to state, tribal, territorial, and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses as well as acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.
- **FTA Buses + Bus Facilities Competitive Program (\$2.0B, expanded)** – This program provides competitive funding to states, tribes, territories, and direct recipients to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities.
- **Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program (\$23B, expanded)** – The BIL guarantees \$8 billion, and authorizes \$15 billion more in future appropriations, to invest in new high-capacity transit projects communities choose to build.
- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Terminal Program (\$5B, new)** – This discretionary grant program will provide funding for airport terminal development and other landside projects.

- **MEGA Projects (\$15B, new)** – This new National Infrastructure Project Assistance grant program will support multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects of national or regional significance.
- **Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program (\$1.4B, new)** – The U.S. Virgin Islands will be eligible to apply for at-risk coastal infrastructure grants, which are a subset of the PROTECT discretionary grants available.
- **Port Infrastructure Development Program (\$2.25B, expanded)** – BIL will increase investment in America’s coastal ports and inland waterways, helping to improve the supply chain and enhancing the resilience of our shipping industry. BIL overall doubles the level of investment in port infrastructure and waterways, helping strengthen our supply chain and reduce pollution.
- **5307 Ferry Program (\$150M, existing)** – BIL retains the \$30 million per year passenger ferry program for ferries that serve urbanized areas.
- **Electric or Low Emitting Ferry Program (\$500M, new)** – This competitive grant program will support the transition of passenger ferries to low or zero emission technologies.
- **Rural Ferry Program (\$2B, new)** – This competitive grant program will ensure that basic essential ferry service continues to be provided to rural areas by providing funds to states and territories to support this service.
- **Charging and fueling infrastructure discretionary grants (Up to \$2.5B, new)** – This discretionary grant program will provide up to \$2.5 billion in funding to provide convenient charging where people live, work, and shop.

- (1) *These values are estimates and may change based on updated factor data each fiscal year.*
- (2) *These values are estimates based on the 2020 FHWA public road mileage data for FYs 2022-2026. Formula funding amounts in FYs 2023-2026 are subject to change as a result of the annual public road mile data certified by FHWA. The 402 amounts do not include redistribution of unawarded 405 balances per 23 USC § 405(a)(8) as that information is unknown at this time. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law specifies NHTSA must distribute the supplemental appropriations for Section 402 in “equal amounts for each fiscal year 2022 through 2026”. This analysis is subject to provisions of FY 2022-FY2026 appropriations acts.*
- (3) *These values are estimates and may change based on updated factor data each fiscal year.*
- (4) *Transit formula funding amounts are subject to changes resulting from the 2020 census or from annual transit service data reported to FTA’s National Transit Database.*
- (5) *Precise allocations would change each year because the formulas use current passenger boarding and cargo data, and this estimate is based on 2019 data.*

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