

GROW AMERICA Act: **Making Critical Investments** **in Highway and Bridge Infrastructure**

The GROW AMERICA Act will provide a larger, more reliable funding stream for highways and bridges, recognizing the essential role that such infrastructure plays in providing access and linking our communities. The nation's 4 million miles of public roadways carry approximately 3 trillion vehicle miles of travel each year. As the U.S. population grows, so too does the strain on our existing highway and bridge infrastructure. Highways and bridges face an \$808.2 billion backlog of investment needs, including \$479.1 billion in critical repair work. And while our nation's bridges are safe, 11 percent of them are classified as structurally deficient and another 14 percent are not designed for the traffic they currently carry.

In order to address these challenges, states and localities need to be able to depend on long-term, dedicated, and reliable federal funding. The **GROW AMERICA Act** will provide a strong investment in aging highways and bridges across the nation, to ensure that they are safe, reliable and well maintained. Specifically, **the Act will:**

- Provide states and localities with four years of reliable, dedicated funding, including \$199 billion over four years for the Federal-aid highway program – \$9 billion more per year than under current law; and
- Support nearly 2.6 million job years of employment.



The GROW AMERICA Act will direct significant resources to the National Highway System (NHS). While the 220,000-mile-long NHS constitutes just 5.5 percent of the nation's road mileage, it

carries 55 percent of all vehicle traffic and 97 percent of truck-borne freight. Today we are not keeping pace with the need for investment on NHS highway and bridges. Therefore, **the Act will:**

- Provide \$92.1 billion over four years in funding for the National Highway Performance Program to repair and reduce traffic congestion on the NHS; and
- Provide \$13.4 billion of investment through a new element of the President's Fix-it-First initiative: the Critical Immediate Investments Program. Half of these funds will be used to improve the pavement condition of NHS routes, and a quarter will be directed to improve structurally deficient Interstate bridges.

Together, these programs will dramatically reduce the existing NHS bridge backlog, enable upgrades to increasingly overburdened highway surfaces, and allow states to add roadway capacity to help alleviate traffic congestion on this critical highway network.

The GROW AMERICA Act will direct significant resources to improving roadway safety on all public roads, including locally owned public roads and roads on tribal land. In 2012, 34,080 people died on the nation's highways, a five percent increase over 2011, representing a serious public health problem. Furthermore, the financial burden associated with highway crashes is estimated to be at least \$230 billion per year. In response, **the Act will:**

- Provide \$10.1 billion over four years for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). This level of HSIP funding will make lasting safety improvements over the next decade, saving lives and reducing roadway fatalities and injuries for years to come; and
- Provide a benefit of \$21 for every federal dollar used for infrastructure-related safety investments.

The GROW AMERICA Act will build on the recent efforts to cut red tape and implement measures to reduce the amount of time it takes to break ground on a transportation project. The GROW AMERICA Act will bolster efforts to expedite review timelines by increasing transparency and accountability measures and improving interagency coordination through concurrent review of projects, while improving outcomes for communities and the environment. Among a range of other factors, the environmental, historic review and permitting processes can at times delay the completion of a surface transportation project. Specifically, **the Act will:**

- Improve transparency and accountability (and institutionalize best practices from Administration successes) by establishing an online system to report the status of environmental reviews and a new interagency center to spearhead the federal government's efforts at permitting reform;
- Increase flexibility for recipients to help speed environmental reviews by using their federal transportation dollars to fund liaisons at other agencies;
- Promote early and substantive engagement among agencies during the review process; and
- Eliminate duplicative and unnecessary requirements, such as the different and overlapping historical preservation processes under the National Historic Preservation Act and the preservation of historic sites known as, "Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act". Similarly, by eliminating a layer of review for certain historic sites, buildings, and bridges that are subject to review under other mechanisms, **the Act** will allow agencies to avoid spending resources to reach the same conclusion multiple times for the same projects.