

# **A Vision for Green Infrastructure in Congress**

**Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.)**

**May 2019**

A comprehensive infrastructure bill is an opportunity to make the investments that not only produce lasting and equitable economic prosperity, promote the efficient movement of people and goods and protect the environment, but also significantly reduce heat-trapping emissions, protect public health, and help communities adapt to unavoidable climate impacts.

As discussion commences in Congress on infrastructure legislation, we must seize this opportunity to advance the goals of clean energy, climate progress, environmental justice and healthy communities, while also fortifying our communities to combat and withstand the adverse impacts of climate change. No region or sector is exempt from the effects of climate change, and all can benefit from cleaner air, cleaner water, and safer infrastructure systems. Making a clean and climate-resilient infrastructure vision a reality will require re-envisioning existing infrastructure programs and re-evaluating how we invest in those programs.

An infrastructure package can serve as a critical down payment on the action that we need to take to combat the climate crisis. Any deal on an infrastructure package must include measures to promote our clean energy economy and mitigate the dangers posed by climate change.

Below are critical principles for making an infrastructure package green and climate-friendly.

## **Take Action on Climate Change**

- Reduce emissions that cause climate change
- Conserve and preserve our precious natural resources and environmental treasures
- Curb pollution and conserve water
- Support durable environmental and ecological balance by using clean, renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and adhering to more sustainable practices when implementing projects

## **Help Communities Adapt**

- Fortify and armor our communities, especially frontline communities and vulnerable populations, to combat and withstand the adverse impacts of climate change
- Use more sustainable materials
- Support planning for a climate-ready future
- Promote responsible spending by investing in projects and natural infrastructure that take into account and are able to withstand climate impacts

## **Clean Up the Energy Grid and Cut Down on Energy Use**

- Significantly reduce energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution through renewable energy and efficiency standards.
- Upgrade residential, commercial and industrial buildings for state-of-the-art energy efficiency by providing incentives to states and municipalities, strengthening building and appliance energy

efficiency standards, and ensuring that the energy powering those buildings is supplied by a modern, clean, and smart energy grid.

### **Factor Climate and Health into Transportation Spending**

- Facilitate a shift toward surface transportation performance standards that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, including by providing funding to help states comply with and execute these new standards.
- Create standards for resilience that will ensure infrastructure money is spent on assets that will both withstand and keep communities safe from the impacts of climate change, including by improving and protecting mass evacuation routes.

### **Make Electric and High-Efficiency Vehicles Affordable and Available**

- Strengthen fuel economy and vehicle greenhouse gas emissions standards, including by providing funding for more research and development into batteries and alternatives to internal combustion engine technologies.
- Accelerate the deployment of affordable electric vehicles through consumer rebate programs, tax credits for manufacturers, vehicle buybacks, and other programs.

### **Electrify and Expand Mass Transit**

- Promote the expansion and electrification of mass transit, as well as reduce congestion and improve accessibility of public transit systems, by prioritizing these goals when allocating funding, including when distributing Highway Trust Fund maintenance dollars.
- Increase the funding for the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program, and develop additional pilot grant programs to develop electrification efforts.
- Encourage a mix of transportation types and uses, diverse transportation options like biking and pedestrian travel, development within existing neighborhoods, and community engagement.

### **Ensure Safe Drinking Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Systems**

- Expand, improve, and modernize the distribution of grants and State Revolving Fund contributions, including by providing funding and expertise to better identify community needs for water-related funding allocations and eradicating the environmental contaminants of the 20th century.

### **Build Clean, Healthy, and Energy Efficient Schools**

- Fund the testing for and removal of contaminants, such as PCBs and lead from school facilities.
- Improve energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energy for power demand at schools.

### **Lower Emissions and Air Pollution at Airports, Ports, and Waterways**

- Provide incentives for greenhouse gas emission reductions at major transportation hubs through the use of grants for the electrification of support equipment and through funding linked to air quality designations.

### **Protect Communities and the Climate from Natural Gas Disasters**

- Improve safety, protect consumers and create good-paying jobs by reducing and preventing gas leaks in the production and distribution system through strengthening standards and providing funding to accelerate the repair and replacement of aging, leaking pipeline infrastructure.

### **Ensure a Safe Workplace and a Livable Wage**

- Support standards, funding, and training to protect workers from climate impacts, including preventable heat-related injuries and death.
- Ensure that workers on federally funded projects are paid the prevailing wage by supporting Davis-Bacon protections.
- Invest in programs and resources that close the skills gaps, ensuring the American workforce can swiftly and seamlessly transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.