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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUNAWAY TRUCK: BUFFALO, WYOMING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truck Speed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truck Weight</td>
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<td>Cargo Shift</td>
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</table>

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HCSS President & CFO Steve McGough, p. 12

ON THE COVER

New Transportation Construction Market Intelligence Service: Your New Tool

FEATURES

Q&A: Transportation Makes America Work (TMAW)

2020 Legislative Year Ahead: Not Throwing Away Our Shot

The Last Turn: Highlights from the Start of 2020

IN EVERY ISSUE

From the Chairman, p. 6

Dave Bauer: The Arena, p. 8

From the Foundation, p. 10

Regulatory Roundup, p. 26

AEM Corner, p. 29
“Transportation Builder”(TB) is the official publication of the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), a federation whose primary goal is to aggressively grow and protect transportation infrastructure investment to meet the public and business demand for safe and efficient travel. In support of this mission, ARTBA also provides programs and services designed to give its members a global competitive edge. TB is the primary source of business, legislative, regulatory, safety and economic news that matters most to transportation development professionals.

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January-February 2020
New ARTBA Business Solution

The fundamentals of the transportation construction market continue to be strong as the ARTBA Economics team reviews data coming in from the end of 2019. Additional federal investment through the annual appropriations process and continued growth in state and local government transportation programs are driving a strong market.

Transportation contractors completed nearly $154.5 billion in construction work in 2019, according to the latest information from the U.S. Census Bureau. This is up 8.4 percent from 2018. Highway, street and pavement work was up nearly 16 percent in 2019—reaching $64.3 billion compared to $55.5 billion in 2018.

This is just a small example of the market intelligence that is provided to ARTBA members and industry analysts by our economics team, led by Dr. Alison Premo Black.

The focus of our cover story this issue is ARTBA’s Transportation Construction Market Intelligence Service, a new cutting-edge tool for members and other business leaders to put details of the $330 billion public and private transportation construction and maintenance industry at their fingertips.

The service helps users examine the market across all modes: highways, bridges, rail and transit, airports, and ports and waterways. Dr. Black and her team pull together other market drivers beyond the data to give users the full picture of the industry and insights to make better decisions.

One additional advantage: the service is customizable, so users can laser-focus on their market geography.

Learn more about the new economics dashboard on page 12. Our outlook for the 2020 federal legislative session and November election begins on page 19. And, on page 14, ARTBA President Dave Bauer explains why you should contribute to the Transportation Makes America Work (TMAW) advocacy program.

As always, thanks for reading Transportation Builder.
The practical wisdom quoted above was evident at a consequential Jan. 22-23 meeting of ARTBA's Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). Led by Martin Marietta Materials Chairman & CEO Ward Nye and Duit Construction President Tim Duit, the SPC is charged with “developing a business plan that will identify the direction and key priorities to guide ARTBA’s activities and initiatives for the next 3-5 years.”

It’s been several years since the association has engaged in such a formal planning process, but the new approach reflects a positive change that ARTBA President Dave Bauer and his team are bringing to their management of our association. As Ward observed at the Charlotte, N.C., meeting’s outset, “There are several key reasons why businesses and national association initiate such planning exercises: they are outcome-focused and actually work to achieve their intended purpose.”

With the direction of a veteran planning consultant, the group dedicated nine hours over two days—with conversations continuing the first night during dinner—working to build consensus. The discussions were engaging, thoughtful, collegial, and forward-looking. The more than 15 participants were a “healthy mix of association veterans and new voices,” as one noted, adding the meeting’s strength was the “diversity of ideas expressed.” Another said the best part was “getting the issues and the programs on the table to evaluate them. Just the right number of people on the committee.”

Most notably, the SPC reaffirmed ARTBA's core mission of advocating for increased investment in transportation infrastructure, along with the need for a long-term and sustainable funding source, which at the federal level, means a permanent solution for the Highway Trust Fund. The group also reiterated the importance of protecting the market with expanded regulatory advocacy activities to help ensure the efficient delivery of transportation improvements.

The SPC still has a great deal of work to complete in several additional areas. An interim report will be delivered to the ARTBA board at its March 9 meeting in Las Vegas during CONEXPO. We are expecting to present the final strategic plan to the board at its May 13 meeting during the Federal Issues Program.

Drucker is right: the future will not happen if one wishes enough. But, with the intellectual firepower put forward by the outstanding volunteer leaders gathered around the table in Charlotte and the ongoing efforts of our seasoned D.C.-based staff, all ARTBA members should be optimistic we will have a plan that leads to a better future for the association and our industry.
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Perception, Reality & Choice

“- A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

—Winston Churchill

Perception is reality, according to a common axiom particularly appropriate in the political and public policy arenas. We all know the negative perceptions about Washington, D.C., and federal government action that have been prevalent for the past decade. The accuracy of those perceptions may be debatable, but their preponderance is not.

By contrast, the quote from Winston Churchill suggests the way we choose to see the potential of any situation has a direct bearing on how we approach it. While perception may be reality to some, Churchill counters the real import of perception is the individual’s underlying mindset. With today’s 24-hour news cycle, non-stop commentary represented as fact, and conflicting statements from public officials, it is not surprising information overload can cause frustration and anger.

I am certainly not going to try to make sense out of the current state of affairs in Washington, D.C., or its inhabitants. One thing I do know for certain is the authorization of the federal highway and public transportation programs expires Sept. 30. To inform our perception of this reality, it is important to assess the current situation:

• A five-year reauthorization of the federal highway program that increases investment by 27 percent was approved unanimously in July 2019 by the Senate Environment & Public Works (EPW) Committee;

• President Donald Trump told Congress during his Feb. 4 State of Union address: “We must also rebuild America’s infrastructure. I ask you to pass Senator [EPW Committee Chairman] John Barrasso’s highway bill to invest in new roads, bridges, and tunnels all across the land;”

• House Democrats have unveiled infrastructure principles that call for an equally if not more robust reauthorization of the surface transportation programs than the Senate measure; and

• Republican and Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill continue to promote infrastructure as a post-impeachment process area for bipartisan common ground and governing.

If someone told me five years ago that we would begin the next reauthorization year with an unprecedented State of the Union shot in the arm for legislation that would produce the largest increase in highway investment in two decades and had already been approved by a congressional committee, I would have taken that starting position without hesitation.

It shouldn’t take an optimist to recognize the opportunity the transportation construction industry has in 2020 and, more importantly, the potential result far outweighs any difficulties we may encounter.

While we may be off to a good start, that is not going to be enough. Continue to watch for and act on grassroots messages such as we sent in mid-February about the Senate revenue proposal and please plan to attend the May 12-14 ARTBA Federal Issues Program and TCC Fly-In to personally urge your congressional delegation to deliver on the infrastructure promises both parties continue to make.

Dave Bauer
We’ve added 2 new TMA’s to our fleet!

Continuing the Safe-Stop TMA® legacy, Trinity Highway is proud to present the latest in our line of TMA’s - the SS180 M and the SMT. Both are tested to the Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) Test Level 3 for use on shadow, barrier and advanced warning vehicles, and feature hinged steel frames and replaceable, energy absorbing cartridges.

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The SMT, a trailer mounted attenuator, attaches to a standard pintle hitch and is available with manual or automated tilting arrow or message boards. Easily attached and detached, this trailer system allows for efficient deployment and truck fleet utilization.
35... 25... 21... 10... and 3.

No, these aren’t your picks for the next lottery. But they are significant to the ARTBA Transportation Development Foundation (TDF).

2020 marks the TDF’s 35th anniversary of “supporting research, education and public awareness” related to transportation development issues. It is the milestone 25th anniversary of the industry-first Young Executive Development Program (YEDP), known today as the Industry Leader Development Program (ILDP). This year also marks the 21st year of providing post-high school financial assistance to the children of highway workers killed or permanently disabled on the job. And it’s the 10th anniversary of the Transportation Development Hall of Fame’s launch.

Finally, 3 is the number of ways your firm, organization, university, or agency can engage with these programs during 2020.

Hall of Fame
The Hall of Fame honors “individuals or families from the public and private sectors who have made extraordinary contributions to U.S. transportation development over their lifetime and demonstrated exceptional leadership.” There are two categories to nominate someone: Transportation Design & Construction Industry Innovators and Transportation Design & Construction Industry Leaders (Individuals or Families).

– Nominations Deadline: April 1

The 2019 and 2020 classes will be honored May 12 in the Nation’s Capital at a special dinner during the ARTBA Federal Issues Program. The 2019 class included: Fred Fehsenfeld, Sr., Heritage Group founder; Pete Ruane, former three-decade ARTBA president & CEO; Ethel Birchland, 1920s era ARTBA executive; and Bill Burgett, Kokosing Company founder.

Industry Leadership Development Program
Launched by 1995 ARTBA Chairman Bill Mulligan (Ingersoll Rand), the ILDP became a model replicated by others in the construction space. For a quarter of a century, it has been developing the next generation of association and industry leaders. The ILDP is a two-and-a-half day “boot camp” about transportation industry economics, how U.S. work is funded and financed, how actions by the federal government impact the industry, and how to become politically engaged to help shape policy.

The ILDP boasts nearly 800 graduates from 200 industry firms, state contractor chapters and public agencies. Two have been elected ARTBA chairman and many more are serving in other association leadership positions.

The target group is executives between the ages of 30-50. Admission is competitive. This is an excellent opportunity to nominate your organization’s best and brightest. This year’s event is May 12-14 in Washington, D.C.

– Nomination Deadline: April 1

Lanford Family Highway Worker Memorial Scholarship Program
Another first-of-its-kind, this fund has supported 180 scholarships to worthy students from more than 30 states, allowing them to pursue undergraduate and graduate courses as well as technical training.

If you are aware of students who could benefit, contact ARTBA’s Melanie Laird at 202.683.1029 or mlaird@artba.org

– Student Application Deadline: April 17

Nomination and application forms can be found at artbatdf.org.

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Public and private transportation construction and maintenance work in the United States totaled over $330 billion last year, or nearly 1.5 percent of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product. This activity helped more than $610 billion in business activity surge throughout all sectors of the economy.

A market this large is influenced by numerous variables, but tracking multiple data sources or monthly fluctuations can be both daunting and confusing, especially without the proper perspective. What are on-the-ground contractors saying about existing and anticipated market conditions? Where are the most robust federal, state, and local government contract awards being made today? Which of these public sectors are considering revenue increases that could indicate new opportunities tomorrow?

Now, ARTBA introduces a cutting-edge Transportation Construction Market Intelligence Service powered by a dashboard that will answer these questions and put new insights and clarity at your fingertips. It is developed and supported by our economics and government affairs experts.

“This service will help you to understand the current market across all modes—highways, bridges, rail and transit, airports and ports and waterways,” says Dr. Alison Premo Black, ARTBA’s chief economist, who led the development effort. “We’ve also pulled together other market drivers beyond the data to give you the full picture of the industry and the insights you need to make better decisions.”

The service provides three key value-added reports:

- State & local government contract awards for highway, bridge, airport, railroad, and port and waterway projects;
- Value of construction put in place for completed work across all modes; and
- Federal-aid obligations for highway and bridge work.

The analytics platform will empower users to customize their data experience—quickly identifying and selecting market trends, saving money and time.
“We know that legislative and regulatory developments in the Nation’s Capital and the statehouses can have a significant impact on business decisions,” says Dean Franks, ARTBA’s senior vice president of congressional relations. “We will provide the latest insights in these arenas to help our members and customers weigh their current activity and future plans.”

For over 30 years, ARTBA has been the leading source of market intelligence for Wall Street analysts, Fortune 500 companies, public agencies and other executives in the transportation design, construction, traffic safety and heavy equipment industry. This new service harnesses and leverages ARTBA’s expertise and market data at a powerful new level of individualization.

“This is part of our core mission,” says ARTBA President Dave Bauer. “We are committed to working with our members and industry analysts to refine and improve this new service, which will help them grow their firms and meet the public and business demand for safe and efficient travel.”

Mark Holan is ARTBA’s editorial director.

Learn how to subscribe: economics.artba.org
ARTBA’s Transportation Makes America Work (TMAW) advocacy program is focused exclusively on building and protecting the transportation construction market.

TMAW operates like a political campaign, utilizing tactics that support the transportation construction industry’s policy priorities, legal activities and grassroots lobbying efforts. These tactics include coalition development and leadership, issue advertising, consultant support, social and digital media, websites, videos and publications, public opinion polling, economic research and analysis, media outreach and special events.

TMAW’s primary focus is not the general public; rather the target audiences are inside the D.C. Beltway: members of Congress and their staffs, federal agency officials, the White House, think tanks and other policy organizations, as well as D.C. and Capitol Hill media outlets.

During the past 25 years, the TMAW program was key to passage of four highway and transit investment laws, including: TEA-21 (1998), SAFETEA-LU (2005), MAP-21 (2012) and FAST Act (2015).

TMAW was also the driving force behind ARTBA’s legal efforts that helped ensure transportation projects moved forward in Baltimore, Atlanta, Sacramento, and Salt Lake City in the early 2000s. It helped overturn a decision in 2013 declaring Virginia’s P3 law unconstitutional. If allowed to stand, the decision would have been a threat to P3 enabling statutes nationwide. And it worked to overturn a lower court decision blocking construction of Maryland’s Purple Line rail project in 2017. TMAW investments are currently supporting ARTBA’s defense of President Donald Trump’s repeal and rewrite of the 2015 “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) rule.

ARTBA President Dave Bauer sat down with Transportation Builder’s editorial team to discuss the program.

TB: When and how did TMAW start?

BAUER: The TMAW advocacy concept has been around since 1989. In the early years, it was known as BABATT—Building a Better America Through Transportation. It was launched to build political support for a major boost in highway funding related to the next authorization bill, which eventually became the 1991 ISTEA law signed by President George H.W. Bush. The name changed to TMAW in the late 1990s.

TB: How is TMAW structured? How does it work?

BAUER: Think of TMAW as the funding umbrella organization for a host of advocacy initiatives that help execute the industry’s agenda on Capitol Hill, in the regulatory and legal arenas, and at the state level since the 2014 launch of our Transportation Investment Advocacy Center™. Membership dues in large part support the association’s D.C. operations and member service programs, whereas TMAW contributions from ARTBA member firms, organizations and state chapters are advocacy-focused, and are therefore over and above their dues. TMAW allows us to back allies that help advance our transportation investment and regulatory agenda. These include the Transportation Construction Coalition, which we co-chair with AGC, The Road Information Program and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Americans for Transportation Mobility coalition.

Our goal through TMAW is to keep the political pressure on Congress and the Executive Branch to act on critical transportation investment policy and regulatory issues. When necessary, TMAW’s resources are also directed to the legal arena to address threats aimed at stopping or delaying transportation improvements.
TB: What are specific activities on ARTBA’s advocacy agenda that TMAW bolsters?

BAUER: In 2020, our mission is clear: helping ensure passage of a robust infrastructure investment package that includes a permanent solution for the Highway Trust Fund. Beyond the coalition support, public opinion polling, grassroots tools and advocacy advertising, TMAW helps ensure we retain top D.C. consultants, including Ballard Partners. The firm, led by Brian Ballard, has the best-connected lobby shop with the Trump administration and has been able to regularly facilitate meetings with key White House staff and agency officials. We also continue to receive technical and legislative assistance from the tax and finance professionals from Ernst & Young. They have been invaluable during our meetings with the Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service.

TB: Why not just make TMAW activities part of dues?

BAUER: Our advocacy activities are impacted by the external environment. While our work in this area never stops, potential opportunities and threats can necessitate that we ramp up our efforts. A case in point was the robust TMAW push in 2017 as we attempted to include a Highway Trust Fund fix as part of comprehensive tax reform. By contrast, our core operational activities require constant focus and are more long-term in nature. The one-two punch of TMAW and membership dues allow us to be responsive and transparent in how we raise and use the resources our members invest with us.

TB: Who supports TMAW?

BAUER: The program is generously supported each year by 30-50 companies, state chapter affiliates and other organizations with a direct stake in the transportation market. The Senate has a five-year highway reauthorization bill—America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act—that includes a 27 percent increase in investment. The House has just released its principles for an infrastructure package that call for investment levels well beyond the Senate bill. And President Trump Feb. 4 called for the passage of the Senate bill this year. These are obviously positive developments and we remain cautiously optimistic about the prospects for action. That's why we are asking all ARTBA members to consider supporting TMAW—now—so that the industry has the necessary resources to fight the good fight.

John Schneidawind is ARTBA’s vice president of public affairs.
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Impeachment is in the rearview mirror; the U.S. elections for president, one third of the Senate, and the full House are visible on the horizon. Arriving even quicker: the Sept. 30 expiration of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

That makes this spring and summer a critical period for ARTBA members to push Congress to pass a robust surface transportation reauthorization bill with a permanent revenue solution for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). In the words of the Broadway hit “Hamilton,” let’s not throw away our shot.

Progress in 2019
While it often seems Democrats and Republicans could not be more divided, the Senate Environment & Public Works (EPW) Committee last July unanimously approved America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA). Led by Sens. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) and Tom Carper (D-Del.), the $287 billion legislation calls for a 17 percent increase in investment in year one, growing to a 27 percent increase by the fifth year. ATIA would create a new discretionary bridge program and includes provisions to address resilience and climate. Such a bipartisan showing demonstrates that infrastructure continues to be a unifying issue in Congress.

Progress on ATIA was followed by a year-end spending deal that, for the third consecutive year, brought additional funds to federal highway programs.

Not only were FAST Act authorization levels met, but Congress appropriated $4.1 billion in additional investment for highway, transit, and aviation funding. ARTBA Chief Economist Dr. Alison Premo Black forecasts real market growth of at least 5 percent in 2020.

ARTBA and its allies also successfully urged Congress to repeal a scheduled $7.6 billion rescission in unobligated highway contract authority, as a part of the year-end spending agreement. This decision gives stability to state departments of transportation budgets for this year’s construction season.

House Plans
In January, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chair Peter Defazio (D-Ore.) announced a “Moving Forward” framework, a proposal to invest $760 billion in infrastructure, including $489 billion over five years for a surface transportation reauthorization.

The plan would increase investment highway and transit investment by 48 percent over FAST Act levels and further prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure, even though 75 percent of federal funds already go toward improving existing roadways. However, the legislative language for the reauthorization is still being crafted, leaving many details to be determined.

Shortly before “Moving Forward” was released, T&I Committee Republican Reps. Sam Graves (Mo.) and Rodney Davis (Ill.), outlined their surface transportation program priorities. While few specifics were offered, committee Republicans said they want to focus on long-term sustainability of the HTF, innovation, streamlining project delivery, rural communities, and state flexibility.

White House Plans
In his Feb. 4 State of the Union (SOTU) address, President Donald Trump called on Congress to pass ATIA.

The Democratic response, delivered by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, also highlighted infrastructure investment. She pointed to the actions taken at the state-level as a driver for federal action.

President Trump followed his address with release of his Fiscal Year 2021 budget. The budget outlined a 10-year, $810 billion surface transportation reauthorization proposal, combined with $190 billion in additional infrastructure investment. If enacted, the one-two punch of $190 billion in immediate investment, combined with a long-term surface transportation reauthorization, could significantly re-shape our nation’s surface transportation system.

The budget did not offer specifics about the revenue to pay for the plan.

$100 Billion Question
With real proposals on the table, House and Senate leaders are having serious conversations about how to fix the HTF with a sustainable, user-fee based solution. The long-standing challenge: finding a solution that attracts bipartisan support and raises enough revenue.

Consult ARTBA’s Presidential Candidates Guide
The major presidential candidates have released infrastructure plans that would dramatically increase federal investment. ARTBA is tracking these plans in an online guide being regularly updated until the November election. Find ARTBA’s “Guide to Presidential Candidates’ Views on Transportation” in the Government Affairs section of artba.org.

Continued on page 20
While the Congressional Budget Office forecasts the HTF will remain solvent through September 2021, the additional revenue needed to pay for a new five-year surface transportation bill remains substantial. As drafted, an estimated $100 billion is needed to fund ATIA.

The Senate has found common ground on electric vehicles. Bipartisan leadership in the EPW Committee agree that drivers of such vehicles should pay a road user fee. This fee is one likely component of a final Senate bill, but would only generate a small portion of the revenue needed to support ATIA’s investment levels.

The House Ways & Means Committee has been more tight-lipped around a possible solution. Chairman Richard Neal (D-Mass.) has been meeting with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin about possible revenue raisers. Neal’s preference is to wait for an agreement to be announced between both parties and the White House before moving ahead.

Election Year Squeeze

The pace in Washington always quickens in an election year. Senators and representatives spend more time back home campaigning, so the legislative agenda is often frontloaded. That means the spring months are critical.

A presidential election year also quickens activity on the regulatory front as administration officials strive to complete their priorities in case President Trump is limited to one term. ARTBA expects the first half of 2020 to be busy, as we await final rules on:

- Modifications to Hours of Service rules
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s clarification of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles rule

ARTBA maintains a scorecard of regulatory actions, which is regularly updated on the “Government Affairs” section of artba.org. Click on “Regulatory,” then “Ripe for Regulatory Reform Scorecard.”

Our Shot

The transportation construction industry has a great opportunity to help advance a surface transportation reauthorization bill in both chambers. But we need your help. Here’s what you can do:

- Engage directly with lawmakers, either in their districts or in Washington, D.C., about the work you do, and the need for transportation investment and to fix the HTF.
- Invite your delegation to a project site or business location. Educate them about jobs and the larger boost that transportation investment gives to the economy.
- Take grassroots action when alerted by ARTBA.
- Register for the May 12-14 Federal Issues Program (FIP) and Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) Fly-In in Washington, D.C. There, you will hear important legislative, regulatory and market updates, and have an opportunity meet with your congressional delegation in person.

With your continued leadership, we can get the job done.

Lauren Schapker is ARTBA’s vice president of legislative affairs.
2020 FEDERAL ISSUES PROGRAM
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ARTBA Mobilizes Support for NEPA Reform

By Nick Goldstein
ngoldstein@artba.org

“The current I-70 project right through the heart of Denver is really a poster child for the need to update the NEPA process,” said ARTBA Director Matt Girard, Plenary Group Civil Division head, at a Feb. 10 press conference in Denver relating to President Donald Trump’s proposal to reform the National Environmental Policy Act. “The permit process for that project took over 13 years and it ended up with a document that was almost 16,000 pages in length,” he added.

Girard said that along with more than 200 community meetings that took place to discuss the changes, it required more than 148 mitigation requirements that cost $58 million for taxpayers. His insightful comments starkly illustrated the problem at hand.

The Trump administration proposal to modernize NEPA is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. That’s why ARTBA and its members are working to build support for it, and why ARTBA President Dave Bauer stood behind President Trump at a Jan. 9 White House event announcing the initiative.

While NEPA is an essential tool for protecting the environment and ensuring meaningful feedback about projects, it has not been fundamentally improved in more than 30 years. Development opponents have weaponized NEPA’s outdated review procedures to delay—often for years—or to derail transportation improvement projects.

Such delays and uncertainties add significant costs to these important projects, at a time when funding remains inadequate to needs.

Pat Goss, executive director of ARTBA state chapter affiliate, the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association, wrote an op-ed column supporting NEPA reform, which was picked up by multiple media outlets.

I testified at a second Feb. 25 EPA public hearing in the Nation’s Capital, noting, that “[a]dversaries have weaponized NEPA’s outdated review procedures to cause extensive delay, or even derail completely, much needed transportation improvement projects.”

The proposed changes to NEPA will result in a more expeditious, while still thorough, review process, without impacting existing environmental standards. It will not undermine environmental stewardship in planning transportation projects, which will still have to comply with the federal Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and other statutes.

We Need Your Help
The White House Council on Environmental (CEQ) has opened a public comment period on their proposal, ending March 10.

Opponents will be filling the docket and news stories with negative comments. So, it’s critical that you make your voice heard.

ARTBA will submit comments and urges your firm or association to do so, too.

The most effective comments “tell a story” of cost increases, delays and jobs lost because of NEPA abuses. Conversely, “cookie cutter” submissions are usually discounted by federal policymakers.


I am available to help with filing comments and can be contacted directly at ngoldstein@artba.org or 202.683.1005. Thanks for your continued support.

Nick Goldstein is ARTBA’s vice president of regulatory & legal issues.
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Modern mobility is a key topic at The Tech Experience at CONEXPO-CON/AGG, March 10-14 in Las Vegas. Construction professionals will be able to rethink how infrastructure can sustain the nation’s growing number of vehicles and how to rebuild it.

“The Ray: Creating the Highway of the Future” highlights an 18-mile stretch of Interstate 85 in Georgia that has incorporated solar paving, rubberized asphalt, roll-over tire safety stations, and perennial wheat plots along this roadway to explore greener infrastructure solutions. There are also sessions about wireless energy transfer, road repair mobile apps, and autonomous equipment bringing the jobsite into the future.

Help Wanted is Getting Help
The debut Workforce Solutions Area on the Festival Grounds will provide ideas to attract workers who may not have considered a career in manufacturing or the construction trades and connect them with contractors and manufacturers having trouble filling those positions.

Association of Equipment Manufacturers’ (AEM) Workforce Development Director Julie Davis says the demonstration space showcases recruitment best practices. “Our hope is that attendees leave with some ideas they can take back home and use to better promote themselves and their industry.”

Industry workforce development is a major focus for AEM in 2020. Find more resources for both executives and human resources professionals to recruit new talent at AEM.org.

Automation Informing Workforce Needs
For years, earthmoving manufacturers have been adding automation to machines. Today, there are more than 100,000 machines equipped with machine control, according to Cameron Clark, earthworks business area manager at Trimble.

“We are already on the path of automation,” Clark says. “We have gone from people on site putting stakes in the ground to 3D machine control where you can remove the stakes and control the blade automatically to keep grade.”

While semi-autonomous machines improve productivity, they still rely on the intelligence of a skilled operator. Clark says that with the today’s technology, experienced operators run 41 percent faster and 75 percent more accurate, while new operators run 28 percent faster and 100 percent more accurate.

Clark believes it would benefit human operators if automated machines took on more mundane tasks while operators handled value-added jobs. More automation might also help reduce fatigue and stress on human operators, resulting in improved safety. Instead of traveling away from home for weeks at a time, an operator might transition to a different role managing equipment remotely.

Learn more from Cameron Clark at CONEXPO-CON/AGG at his Tech Talk, “How Autonomous Construction Machines Will Revolutionize the Construction Industry.”

See all the event details and register now at conexpoconagg.com
Highlights from the Start of 2020

Moles Dinner in New York City
ARTBA and AGC contractor leaders attended the Jan. 29 Moles Dinner in New York City. Left to right: Incoming AGC President Bob Lanham (Williams Brothers Construction Co.), 2004 ARTBA Chairman Rich Wagman (Wagman, Inc.), 2020 ARTBA Chairman Steve McGough (HCSS) and 2018 ARTBA Chairman Bob Alger (The Lane Construction Corporation).

Strategic Planning Committee, Charlotte, N.C.
ARTBA's Strategic Planning Committee met Jan. 22-23 in Charlotte, N.C. The group is charged with “helping develop a business plan that will identify the direction and key priorities to guide the association’s activities and initiatives for the next 3-5 years.”

ARTBA at the White House
ARTBA President Dave Bauer, first on left, attended President Donald Trump’s Jan. 9 White House announcement about reforming environmental rules to spur transportation improvement projects.
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