January 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

President Biden and his U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) team played a critical role in helping shepherd the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) through the legislative process. If implemented properly, it should facilitate the most dramatic upgrade and renewal of the nation’s surface transportation network since the creation of the Interstate Highway System in 1956.

The IIJA is an opportunity to demonstrate a well-crafted and executed federal transportation improvement plan can strengthen economic competitiveness and enhance the quality of life for all Americans. The seriousness of this responsibility demands a proactive and comprehensive engagement plan to help ensure the years of talking about the need for infrastructure action and the months of developing such an initiative produce the promised results.

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) is as committed to partnering with U.S. DOT on the IIJA’s proper implementation as we were in working with Congress on its development and passage. Below are the association’s core principles as we approach this monumental undertaking.

- Continue the pursuit of common ground policies and deliverables that led to bipartisan congressional approval and broad-based stakeholder enthusiasm.
- Maintain the federal/state partnership for the distribution and oversight of surface transportation funds to ensure all recipients have the flexibility to address their unique transportation challenges.
- Empower state and local agencies via the annual appropriations process to fully use their IIJA authority to deliver highway, bridge, and public transportation improvements.
- Ensure the safety of workers and other roadway users during construction, renovation, and maintenance of projects.
- Adhere to the specifics and intent of the IIJA in the appropriations and implementation processes to preserve the continuity of surface transportation funds and maintain the delicate balance of negotiated policy priorities that the law’s bipartisan authors intended.
- Highlight the impacts of highway and public transportation improvements to keep practitioners accountable and the public informed about the real-world benefits for their daily lives.

ARTBA will pursue these principles as the U.S. DOT fulfills its critical role of transitioning the IIJA from a legislative success to a safer and more efficient national transportation network.
Among the priority areas on which we look forward to working with you and your team are:

- Recognizing the market realities faced by the transportation construction industry with respect to any Buy America regulations, including limited availability of construction materials and increasing costs.
- Ensuring meaningful industry involvement in any hiring preference (i.e., “local hire”) initiatives proposed by state and local transportation agencies.
- Modernizing implementation of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program to facilitate long-term success.
- Incorporating the need to recruit and retain the qualified and diverse workforce necessary to deliver on the IIJA’s increased investment levels.
- Utilizing the IIJA’s reforms to the project review and approval process to deliver transportation improvements in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- Balancing climate change strategies with growing mobility needs and the increased reliance on roadway-based goods movement.
- Embracing technology advances to enhance project delivery and improve system operations.

A timely and outcome focused IIJA implementation process can be foundational for the federal government’s future role in transportation infrastructure.

We look forward to working with you to help guarantee the IIJA delivers results for all Americans.

Sincerely,

David C. Bauer
President & CEO