

## 2022 Washington Summit Talking Points

Thank you, (*Senator/Congressman/Staff Name*), for taking the time today to meet with us. We're members of the local chapter of NUCA, the national trade association of the utility construction industry. We build the subsurface infrastructure that carries drinking water, removes wastewater, and also help dig and place utility, gas, electric, and broadband lines.

It goes without saying we have a very strong interest in Congress's work on infrastructure. We think our expertise in building and maintaining these systems can help you and your staff make an informed decision on these infrastructure bills and what will really help our state and local communities and economy.

### Water Infrastructure / Lead Pipes

- The United States has over **half a trillion dollars in water infrastructure needs** through the year 2040
  - **\$271 billion will be needed to maintain and replace wastewater and stormwater treatment systems** (Source: EPA)
  - **\$473 billion will be needed to improve drinking water infrastructure** (Source: EPA)
- For every **\$1 billion invested in water infrastructure, anywhere from 23,000-28,000 jobs are created**, spread across multiple industries
- **NUCA's ASK:** There are over 1.6 million miles of underground pipe water infrastructure in the US today, including **6.1 million lead service lines that remain in use in U.S. cities. More resources are needed to fully address this critical health issue.**
- NUCA strongly supported reauthorizing the State Revolving Funds at **bold levels**
  - **H.R. 3684, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), contained over \$55 Billion in water funding, including almost \$15 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRFs**
    - IIJA contained almost \$15B to remove/replace lead pipes
      - **Even now that IIJA has passed, it will likely require another \$30B in funding to replace all lead pipes in America.** (For a total of \$45B. Source: Brookings)
- **NUCA's ASK:** **NUCA supports lifting the cap on Private Activity/Exempt Facility Bonds (PAB/EFBs), under jurisdiction of House Ways and Means Committee.**
  - Other private activities are not subject to the volume cap already, including government-owned airports, municipal-owned solid waste disposal facilities, recovery zone facility bonds, and other green building and educational facilities
  - Regulatory changes could unlock upwards of \$43 billion in incremental water infrastructure investments, and \$25 billion in wastewater investments
  - **We ask that you support future legislation lifting this cap.**

## IIJA Implementation

- **NUCA's ASK:** The administration must implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act with respect to Congressional intent; **Congress must provide appropriate oversight.**
  - The Biden Administration has missed deadlines to implement key permitting reform provisions, namely, the One Federal Decision process
  - NUCA is concerned about policies such government-mandated PLAs and materials requirements that are not found in the legislation
- NUCA supports timely rollout of IIJA broadband funding
  - **In rural areas, 22.3% of Americans lack 25/3 Mbps home Internet service**
    - 19 million Americans (6%) lack access to fixed broadband at even basic threshold speeds
    - **Only 32% of subscriber broadband service** is provided by modern high-speed fiber optics cable – most Americans still rely on outdated copper-based tech like DSL or cable
      - Federal dollars that fund broadband deployment projects should be used to install the most effective technologies providing the best broadband service as possible at the speeds necessary for modern living; namely, fiber optics cable.

## Workforce Development

- The construction industry continues to face a critical skilled workforce shortage – NUCA supports efforts by Congress to help address the gap, including funding for trade schools and apprenticeship programs
  - 91% of contractors can't fill skilled trade openings, and 61% of contractor firms said projects are being delayed because of workforce shortages. There are at least 650,000 additional construction employees that need to be hired in 2022 to meet the demand.
- **NUCA's ASK:** NUCA supports increased investment in workforce development initiatives, and supports efforts by the government to increase enrollment in trade schools, work-study, and apprenticeship programs
- **NUCA's ASK:** **NUCA urges the expansion of the existing H-2B work visa program to include critical infrastructure construction jobs for both union and non-union employers and streamline the application process.** 66,000 visas for all industries are not enough.
- **NUCA's ASK:** NUCA has a mixed union/non-union membership, but **opposes** government-mandated project-labor agreements (GMPLAs)
  - The industry is already facing critical skilled labor shortages – GMPLAs would lock out essential parts of the workforce and guarantee that any infrastructure package would miss its deadlines
  - Project Labor Agreements increase construction costs by 12% to 20% and reduce the number of companies eligible for projects
  - NUCA **opposes** the Biden Administration Executive Order requiring project-labor agreements on federal contracts over \$35M

- **The Fair and Open Competition Act (S.403/H.R.1284) would protect companies from GMPLAs and is supported by NUCA. NUCA asks offices that are not already co-sponsoring the bill to consider doing so.**

## **Other Issues**

- Our industry is always open to a **jobsite visit** by you or members of your staff. We're proud of what we construct for our local communities. We encourage your staff to reach out to NUCA and our local Chapter to arrange a jobsite visit for you or your staff.

We know the infrastructure in our district and state needs help, and we're the experts that the state and municipalities hire to build these systems for our fellow citizens. Last year's infrastructure bill was a great start to addressing our overall needs. But we need your help in obtaining the additional resources needed for more of these projects.

With those resources, we can hire more people, buy more pipe, concrete, and steel, and when it's done, present to everyone a project that will benefit our district/state for decades to come and help our economy grow.

Thank you for your time today.