

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2021

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Historic Core Infrastructure Bill Signed Into Law

New Resources Directed At Upgrading Nation's Obsolete Water Infrastructure

(Fairfax, Va.) – In a well-attended White House ceremony, President Joe Biden signed into law on Nov. 15 the historic core infrastructure bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, or H.R. 3684). Once fully implemented over the next several years, this legislation will deliver a historic amount of added resources to the American utility construction industry.

“Today, America made a big step forward towards repairing and rebuilding our nation’s critical infrastructure systems,” said National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) CEO Doug Carlson. “Our members are eager to get to work. They’ll be the ones excavating trenches for new water and wastewater lines. They’ll be the ones replacing dangerous lead pipes to bring clean drinking water to communities across the nation. They’ll be building stormwater systems and new water treatment plants. They’ll also be laying new fiber-optic broadband cables, and helping to build modern ports, highways, railroads, and airports.”

“The American utility construction industry is a prime stakeholder in the reconstruction of our nation’s infrastructure systems. We are proud to build the foundations of each of these new projects improving every American community and our national economy,” said Carlson.

This bill is the largest federal investment in the nation’s infrastructure since the 1950s Eisenhower Administration began building the Interstate highway system. Highways will receive the bulk of the \$550 billion of new spending in the \$1.2 trillion bill, sending \$110 billion over the next five years for surface transportation projects. This bill also reauthorized the FAST Act, the nation’s surface transportation law, allowing more consistency in financing and planning highway projects, and enacted crucial permitting reforms to help speed the construction process. Underground utilities construction is a pre-cursor to all highway and bridge projects.

As for the meat-and-potatoes projects this nation’s \$152 billion utility construction industry is known for constructing, the IIJA allocates \$15 billion over five years to both the Drinking Water State Resource Fund (SRF) and Clean Water SRF, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency. Those numbers mean there will be about \$1 billion more per year for each fund than what Congress has allocated in past fiscal year appropriations.

These two federal funds, administered by the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, help communities build their water and sewer systems. These systems include miles of underground pipes, their distribution and treatment plants, water supply sources, storage tanks, and other projects used to

protect public health. Lead service pipe replacement will also be funded by the IJA, which sends \$15 billion to the states to replace these obsolete and dangerous pipes leading to homes and businesses.

NUCA members will also benefit from the more than \$40 billion in the bill set aside to install modern broadband infrastructure at speeds to handle today's increased usage of Internet and video services. The biggest obstacle of wider adoption of fiber-based broadband systems is the cost of constructing new lines. The faster speeds dictated by this bill will "future-proof" these new systems and avoid legacy service issues remaining from older and slower copper lines.

Depending on the construction services offered by our members' businesses, the bill also contains resources to build new or repair obsolete electrical systems. \$73 billion was allocated to the national electric grid resiliency, including \$7 billion to build new electric vehicle charging stations, most of which require some subsurface construction. \$21 billion was allocated to environmental remediation projects, such as improved storm water drainage systems. And \$1 billion will be directed toward replacement of corroding or obsolete municipal gas distribution pipes and hardware.

The bill also includes billions for railroads, ports, airports, urban transit, and other hard infrastructure needs that may involve phases of utility construction in a project.

Our industry is thankful for the bill's Congressional supporters, many of whom heard from our members first-hand when they traveled to Washington, D.C. the week of November 3 to urge support for this historic legislation.

H.R. 3684 passed the House late in the night on November 5 on a 228-206 bipartisan vote. The measure had cleared the Senate back on August 10 with a similar 69-30 vote. The bill was introduced early this session by industry supporter House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.). H.R. 3684 was also strongly supported by House Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.). Core infrastructure is a bipartisan issue that should transcend politics and engender instead a "let's get it done" spirit with our elected officials.

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About The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA)

Founded in 1964, the National Utility Contractors Association represents nearly 1,700 U.S. utility and excavation contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers who provide the materials and workforce to build and maintain our nation's intricate network of water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, and electric infrastructure. NUCA is found online at www.nuca.com, and can be followed on Twitter at [@NUCA_National](https://twitter.com/NUCA_National). The association's Twitter hashtags are #WeDigAmerica and #NUCADigs.