

PRESS RELEASE
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“Let’s Get It Done”

**America’s Utility Contractors Fortified By Presidential Infrastructure Support,
But Now It’s Congress’s Turn To Act**

(Fairfax, Va.) – President Trump’s call for action in his Feb. 4th State of the Union speech for both political parties to put aside politics and pass a highway infrastructure bill is being roundly praised by America’s utility construction executives.

“President Trump recognizes that even in a contentious election year, modernizing our nation’s obsolete infrastructure is an issue both parties can agree to finish,” remarked Dan Buckley, chairman of the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA).

“Sen. Barrasso’s American Transportation Infrastructure Act is a terrific bill. It is a great first step towards modernizing our nation’s highways and transportation system. And President Trump is right: both the full House and Senate need to get into the game and pass this important bill as quickly as possible. Our infrastructure isn’t fixing itself—NUCA’s members will be completing that work but we can only begin these long-term projects after Congress provides the resources,” said Buckley.

The American Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA) has been languishing since Sen. John Barrasso’s (R-WY) Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously passed the bill last July. The bill (S. 2302) is the largest highway infrastructure bill in the nation’s history. ATIA’s five-year, \$287 billion in resources will provide states and businesses with a 27% increase over the previous highway bill. Because of the significant funding provided in the bill toward utility relocation, NUCA has a vested interest in surface transportation legislation.

However, neither chamber has yet scheduled any future action on ATIA or a companion House bill. The House Democratic caucus released their \$760 billion infrastructure framework last month, but has not introduced authorizing legislation or held hearings—let alone a vote—on any aspect of their plan. Serious questions remain open about how to pay for any final bill, with neither party yet providing a set of funding solutions that address long-term infrastructure requirements.

NUCA supports policies that back robust investment in transportation infrastructure. The \$287 billion provided by ATIA over five years is a solid investment, but it does not provide a solution to long-term solvency problems of the Highway Trust Fund, which is financed through federal gasoline taxes. In the long term, NUCA agrees with others in the transportation construction industry that a marginal increase in the gasoline tax is the best way to sustain the funding needed to rebuild America's crumbling roads, bridges and highways. NUCA also supports the bill's repeal of the \$7.57 billion rescission in contract authority scheduled for July 1, 2020.

Sen. Barrasso's ATIA is seeking to address a September 30, 2020 deadline to reauthorize the nation's existing surface transportation law, the FAST Act, which was signed into law in 2015. A failure to meet that deadline will incur costly delays that slow construction schedules and make projects more difficult to complete.

NUCA also will be working with other organizations in the utility, pipeline, and transportation construction sectors to promote legislative language that would provide a uniform exemption from USDOT "hours-of-service" requirements followed by most commercial drivers.

NUCA members are involved in many aspects of highway construction and modernization projects. Underground utilities construction is a pre-cursor to all highway and roadway infrastructure. Our industry members design and build roadway drainage systems, storm and sanitary lines, water mains, excavate highway right-of-ways, provide trenches for buried electrical lines, and build many other critical underground subsystems found in modern highway and bridge construction.

"America's utility contractors and NUCA look forward to working with Congress to get a long-term infrastructure or surface transportation bill enacted into law. And both parties have every incentive to work together and get it done this year, so let's get it done," concluded Buckley.

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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**. The association's Twitter hashtag is **#WeDigAmerica**.