

# THE SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPAL ACCESS TO RESILIENT TECHNOLOGY IN INFRASTRUCTURE (SMART-I) ACT

Everyone agrees that it is well past time to modernize our nation's failing infrastructure. They also understand that the cost and complexity of doing so is incredibly daunting. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that an additional \$2 trillion in spending is needed over the next 10 years to bring America's water systems, roads, bridges and dams into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Regulatory Roadblocks

Beyond the size and scope of the problem, there are other formidable challenges that make the task of updating the country's infrastructure more difficult. For example, many states and municipalities have outdated regulations on the books that do not allow for an open bidding process by mandating the use of specific materials for infrastructure projects. These requirements force states and municipalities to use materials that might not be the best available for the job and increase the costs of infrastructure projects for the taxpayer.

## Sensible Solution

As more costs for infrastructure are shifted on to state and local governments, the federal government should do everything it can to help localities pay for infrastructure improvements. This includes updating procurement practices to allow for open, competitive bidding procedures, which will allow engineers to consider all available innovative technologies and materials and help save taxpayer dollars.

## More for Less

The *Sustainable Municipal Access to Resilient Technology in Infrastructure (SMART-I) Act* will help break through regulatory roadblocks and ensure that open, competitive bidding procedures will be used nationwide for infrastructure projects. The legislation will allow project engineers to select new and innovative materials and to save state, local, and federal taxpayers billions of dollars on infrastructure improvement projects. As just one example, according to recent studies, there is on average a 30% cost savings in water infrastructure project material costs when open competition is applied. It's estimated that open competition could save over \$370 billion on water infrastructure projects alone.

## Legislative Highlights

The *SMART-I Act* will:

- Require the FHA, Army Corps, EPA, and USDA to use an open, and free competitive bidding process for suppliers of construction materials on all future infrastructure projects that receive federal dollars.
- Allow engineers to exercise their professional judgment in choosing materials they deem most appropriate.
- Adhere all Buy America provisions under current law.
- Establish an interagency task force (DOT, EPA, ACE, USDA) to develop a report that:
  - Reviews competition of innovative materials at state level.
  - Identifies procurement practices at state level that are a barrier to new and innovative materials.
  - Provides recommendations for eliminating barriers to new and innovative materials.
  - Reviews how states make recommendations for materials at local levels.
  - Provide recommendations for incorporating life-cycle assessment, resilience, and sustainability into product development.

The *SMART-I Act* will not:

- Mandate one particular material over another.
- Force engineers to choose a material that they do not believe is best for the project.
- Retroactively impact any current or previously authorized infrastructure project.

**Congress can help rebuild our nation's infrastructure while protecting taxpayers by ensuring federally funded infrastructure projects require open, competitive bidding procedures for all materials. For these reasons we urge you to SUPPORT the *Sustainable Municipal Access to Resilient Technology in Infrastructure (SMART-I) Act*.**