



117th U.S. Congress Policy Priorities



Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Funding: Increase the federal motor fuel tax by 25 cents in the short-term, and provide a more stable, long-term revenue source for our national and regional multi-modal transportation systems. Transition to a vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT), or similar user fee as soon as possible; and enact a federal transportation reauthorization bill that is a minimum of 6 years in length. APWA believes increased investment in our country's transportation infrastructure is critical to protecting and enhancing economic development in the U.S. Funding should be focused on safety improvements, maintenance, and modernization of existing infrastructure.

Streamlining: APWA supports 'One Federal Decision' under Executive Order 13807 to eliminate unnecessary, duplicative, and burdensome requirements delaying delivery of critical transportation improvements. Unnecessary, and duplicative federal regulations can add as much as 30% to the cost of building transportation projects. Reducing those costs would significantly increase the number of projects that can be built without new taxes.



Safety: APWA is committed to improving the safety for travelers on our nation's roadways. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 36,096 fatalities from motor vehicle crashes in 2019. In 2018, 6,283 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes. Additionally, an important aspect for transportation safety is physically protecting travelers, as well as protecting their personal information through stringent cybersecurity protocols and data protection. Transportation technology and research and fielding of connected and automated vehicles are advancing rapidly. It is crucial that an appropriate level of federal support and resources are directed to state and local governments for enhancing security and upgrading infrastructure. This type of investment will help to ensure public safety.



Emergency Management & Response

Recognition: Public Works professionals are first responders along with our partners in law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency management in the Emergency Services Sector of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. Therefore, APWA supports public works recognition as first responders be included in any federal legislation, and regulations relating to first responders.

Public works plays a key role in emergency planning, response, and recovery by operating, protecting, and maintaining critical infrastructure services-- water supply, transportation, natural gas, electric, sewage and refuse disposal systems, and public buildings and spaces. In addition to natural and manmade disasters, public works is routinely called upon to assist with response to civil unrest, addressing public health challenges such as homelessness, and ensuring a continuity of services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communications and Interagency Coordination: APWA supports improvements in emergency communication and interagency coordination. Our members who are routinely involved in decision making related to emergency communications, call for:

- Continuing the **Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN)** being developed by FirstNet. Public works agencies depend on a reliable interoperable emergency communications system.
- **National Cybersecurity Guidelines/Best Practices.** Having voluntary national cybersecurity guidelines/best practices would have a significant impact on public works. Public works must have a seat at the table in crafting recommendations.





Emergency Management & Response, continued

Federal Laws and Regulations: Public works professionals play an integral role in drafting organizational disaster plans. Therefore, APWA strongly encourages public works input be considered for full and successful implementation of **the Stafford Act**. The Stafford Act lacks flexibility in the local cost share for catastrophic events, and this must be addressed so local communities are able to fully restore services following such an event. Further, APWA recommends FEMA provide consideration, study, and stronger guidelines/recommendations to communities as to the practical and economic impacts of building or rebuilding in disaster prone areas.

Enact an increased Federal Share Incentive. Under a pilot program allowing FEMA to provide an additional five percent in federal cost share for debris removal projects under Sections 403(a) (3)(A) and 407 of the Stafford Act to those applicants with a FEMA-approved debris management plan. APWA encourages the addition of flexibility into the rule.

Continue review of the Public Assistance (PA) deductible, currently issued under a Supplemental Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. APWA supports the intent of the PA deductible to incentivize states and communities to build more resilient infrastructure, and thus reduce future disaster costs. However, as currently proposed, the rule is vague and may not be weighted properly among the states and/or local governments.

Training: Provide comprehensive cybersecurity training opportunities for public works professionals through Congressional or federal regulatory action.



Water Resiliency

Enhance: Provide robust funding for existing federal programs that support maintenance and development of water and wastewater infrastructure programs, such as the State Revolving Funds, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), Rural Utilities Service, Public Water System Supervision grants, and the Public Works and Economic Development program.

Update: End the isolated approach to permitting and move towards a “One Water” stance by implementing a comprehensive, integrated planning approach to all Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) permitting (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, combined sewer overflow) so that maximum flexibility and cost effectiveness is implemented into the decision-making process.

Support: Adhere to the “One Federal Decision” process laid out under Executive Order 13807, providing a more predictable, transparent, and timely federal review and authorization process for delivering major infrastructure projects.



Science: Regularly evaluate goals, standards, and strategies to incorporate the most recent scientific information and analyses.

Protect: Support programs within the federal government, such as the WaterSMART Drought Response Program, that assist state, local, tribal, and critical service entities with drought-related activities and expand the technology transfer of drought and water conservation strategies.

The American Public Works Association (APWA) represents over 30,000 public works professionals across North America, dedicated to providing essential, high-quality equitable and sustainable services to millions of people in rural and urban communities, both small and large.

APWA members serve in both the public and private sectors, providing expertise to the local, state, and federal government levels. Working in the public interest, our members plan, design, build, operate and maintain, and oversee America’s vast infrastructure networks essential to our nation’s economy, environment, safety, and way of life.

APWA collaborates with all levels of government and supports federal investment in our shared infrastructure. APWA is opposed to unfunded mandates and any effort to impede the appropriate use of public right-of-way, and strongly encourages industry to partner with public works, and all state and local government entities.

APWA supports federal investment and support for professional development training initiatives, including investment in apprenticeships, grants, career and technical education programs, to assist with the growth and utilization of innovative activities related to having a diverse, high-quality public works workforce.

It is important that federal regulations do not become onerous and burdensome to localities in their use of advancing technologies such as connected vehicles, Geographic Information System (GIS) data, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and drones for public works purposes, to improve public safety, service delivery, and cost-effectiveness for all taxpayers.

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