

On May 22nd, the U.S. House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure passed the **Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development for America's 250th** (*BUILD America 250 Act*) (H.R. 8870) with strong, bipartisan support. This bill includes many provisions reflecting top priorities of the Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition and their members across the nation including counties, cities, towns, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and economic development organizations across the United States. Regions and local governments plan for, own, maintain, and operate over **75 percent** of the nation's transportation infrastructure.

The bill includes several provisions that recognize this role and empower local and regional partners to continue investing in the roads, bridges, and safety improvements that power our economy.

Key Local and Regional Provisions in the BUILD America 250 Act

BRIDGES

- The *BUILD America 250 Act* would make record investments in America's bridges, including in locally owned bridges. The bill would continue formula funding for bridges—a practice stood up in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)—but grow the program from \$5.5 billion per year to **\$9 billion per year**.
- While the IIJA Bridge Formula Program included a 15 percent set-aside for off-system bridges, the *BUILD America 250 Act* would include a **25 percent set-aside** for locally owned bridges. The bill would also set the federal cost share for locally owned bridges at **95 percent**, making it easier to advance these critical projects.
- Together, the growth in the program size and the larger set-aside would increase funding available for local bridges by more than **170 percent over IIJA levels**.

COMPETITIVE GRANTS

- The *BUILD America 250 Act* preserves competitive grants by retaining existing programs and establishing new efforts, including the **Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG)** program.
- Importantly, the *BUILD America 250 Act* keeps the **Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A)** program, which is a priority program for the LOT Coalition. With local governments and regional planning organizations eligible to apply, SS4A has helped direct federal resources to urgent safety projects across the country.

FORMULA FUNDING

- The *BUILD America 250 Act* would grow the **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)** program, the most flexible formula funding program supporting both state and local transportation priorities.

PLANNING

- The *BUILD America 250 Act* would **increase funding for MPOs** through the Metropolitan Planning (PL) program, while also reducing the non-federal match requirement from 20 percent to **10 percent**.
- The bill would **expand eligible uses of PL funding** to include fiscal administration of local projects, preliminary design, local technical assistance, and more.
- The bill would also require USDOT to establish a voluntary process for MPOs to **become direct recipients** of PL funds, rather than having the funding flow first through the state.

LOCAL CONSULTATION

– Section 1317 of the *BUILD America 250 Act* would require the Comptroller General to review the suballocation of STBG funding, including how states **consult** with MPOs and RTPOs and how states **select projects** for funding with suballocated dollars. The LOT Coalition believes these processes can and should be improved across the country and welcomes this review as a first step toward that goal.

PERMITTING

– The *BUILD America 250 Act* would **streamline federal environmental review** for certain transportation projects. For example, projects receiving less than \$12 million in federal funding would no longer automatically trigger NEPA review solely because of the federal funding amount.

How to Build on *BUILD America 250* for Local and Regional Priorities

RTPO FUNDING

The *BUILD America 250 Act* makes important progress for local and regional priorities, and Congress can build on that progress by providing guaranteed federal funding for Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). Dedicated RTPO funding would help rural regions identify needs, develop projects, coordinate with state partners, and bring local expertise into transportation decision-making.

PROJECT SELECTION

The bill also creates an opportunity to strengthen transparency and local consultation in project selection. MPOs and RTPOs work directly with communities to identify regional priorities. Stronger consultation before states obligate suballocated funds would help ensure federal dollars advance locally supported projects and deliver better outcomes.

STBG FUNDING

The *BUILD America 250 Act* would increase STBG funding, an important step for one of the most flexible programs available to states and local governments. Additional STBG funding would better reflect how communities use these dollars to advance priority projects and how states routinely transfer funds from NHPP into STBG.

PLANNING FUNDS

The bill also makes important improvements to the MPO planning program, and additional PL funding would build on that progress. Stronger planning capacity helps MPOs support better project development, improve data-driven decision-making, provide technical assistance to local governments, and ensure communities are ready to move priority projects from planning to delivery.

Bottom Line

The *BUILD America 250 Act* proposes generational investments in locally owned infrastructure and safety that align with the LOT Coalition’s priorities. The LOT Coalition supports this bill and will continue working with Congress to pass a final reauthorization bill that includes both robust funding and process reforms needed to ensure that federal investment in infrastructure reaches locally led projects in communities big and small, urban and rural across the country.

Contact: Katie Economou, AMPO Legislative Director, keconomou@ampo.org