

## Infrastructure Bills Must Include Climate Provisions

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Alternate facts continue to plague the conversation (argument) about infrastructure, and what we must do to address our badly neglected national framework.

Let's count the states that have broken heat and cold records in the past two (five?) years. What is the effect of climate change on our infrastructure? Yes, climate change is a real thing documented by real scientists, affecting real people, all people.

In the House, Democrats "conceded that their bill was no ordinary pavement, bridge and tunnel measure... with roads buckling under the heat in Oregon, permafrost melting in Alaska and blackouts rolling across Texas, they argued it was time to shift the nation to a new, zero-emissions economy." (NY Times, July 1, 2021)

Climate change affects our power grid, which cannot possibly be excluded as infrastructure. A decaying power grid can ignite fires, as seen in Paradise, California's Camp Fire in 2018, ignited by a nearly 100-year-old transmission line. The average age of the utility's transmission towers is 68 years old. Some are 108 years old. Those of us evacuated in our state's Cameron Peak and East Troublesome fires can appreciate the urgency of the sheer speed at which the Camp Fire ripped through Paradise in 4 hours, at 80 football fields a minute. (pbs.org, Oct 2019)

An inadequate, poorly weatherized and maintained power grid can freeze up fossil fuel pipelines. The early cost estimates of the statewide freeze in Texas in February 2021 run between "\$80 billion to \$130 billion in direct and indirect economic loss." (Dallasfed.org, April, 2021) The spin that these events were caused by renewable energy sources is just that, spin. Alternate facts.

These climate related impacts on our infrastructure are not limited to coastal "elites" or southern states. The mid-west is not immune, as outlined in a June 2019 story in nymag.com. That year in May saw 500 tornados in 30 days, was underwater from historic flooding, and in Nebraska alone the damages were expected to reach \$1.3 billion. Farmers were so behind in planting the whole year's harvest was in peril. These events washed out roads, and bridges, acknowledged by all as actual infrastructure.

Traditional infrastructure: According to Business Insider, Bank of America (BoFA)- that den of liberal radical left-wing nut jobs- "says about half of Bidens infrastructure plan is traditional, physical, infrastructure." (April 16, 2021). The GOP claimed that number is less than 6%. The Republicans omit broadband internet and the electrical grid from their definition of traditional infrastructure. "According to the bank's report, traditional infrastructure — transportation, buildings, water, broadband, and more — should impact economic growth quickly in the US, while nontraditional infrastructure, like education, training, and research and development, will take more time to boost the economy." While BoFA's team "sees Biden's proposed corporate tax hike to 28% as a potential "drag on growth," it said the proposed \$400 billion in clean energy tax credits should help reduce the tax burden for some companies." The longer-term needs of support for education, training, and research and development have been kicked down the road numerous times since the 1980's, affecting our ability to innovate and support jobs in emerging technologies, including innovative zero emission solutions to our energy needs.

Traditional infrastructure: Clean drinking water? Clean air? Do people really need this to be productive citizens? Replacing lead water pipes? How could the health of our children's brains have anything to do with our workforce? Speaking of children, how about education? What could that possibly have to do with our nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace?

When the GOP had full control of the House, Senate and White House from 2016 to 2018 POTUS 45 talked about our embarrassing, crumbling airports and infrastructure, and yet the GOP talked a good game, and took no action for 99% of their constituents, managing to pass a sweeping tax cut for the richest 1%. The administration inherited an improving economy, claimed full responsibility for the achievements of the previous administration, and proceeded to tear down protections for the vast

majority of US citizens, while lining the pockets of a very few. The tax cuts did not trickle down to benefit the majority. And the miniscule tax cuts afforded the average Joe are set to expire in 2025, unlike the corporate welfare which has greatly added to the US deficit. The GOP can gripe all it wants about passing bills via reconciliation, but that is exactly how they crammed this 40% corporate tax cut down the throats of Americans. Now that POTUS 46 wants to dial back that corporate welfare to 28%, only 7% higher than the current 21%, the alternate facts are on full display.

Why is it urgent that we pass sweeping legislation to improve our infrastructure, and include climate change in the definition? When fiscal conservatives in the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas say “Our analysis indicates winterizing for extreme winter weather events appears financially reasonable” it is an admission of the fact of climate change’s impact on our infrastructure.

Ignoring and mislabeling the issue is not productive. We need to take as much action as possible right now, because the alternate facts party is gerrymandering its way into planetary disaster. I urge you to call and write to all US Senators and legislators to pass an infrastructure bill that includes addressing climate change.

Notes:

- [https://apnews.com/article/biden-infrastructure-climate-change-0bf736c366505e15891c9c9def72a352?utm\\_campaign=GEN%20Communications&utm\\_medium=email&\\_hsmt=138861727&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9KYDlq\\_Oufx4kACBvjemZdMq8EtYULb6Do4nx1cI8pTp7I836wR2FYVXKaGljKkKw7dhrP4rAar\\_iPW6SzDs6rZ7ddJvdjMx5hOMwud49DBzR2v5yg&utm\\_content=138861727&utm\\_source=hs\\_email](https://apnews.com/article/biden-infrastructure-climate-change-0bf736c366505e15891c9c9def72a352?utm_campaign=GEN%20Communications&utm_medium=email&_hsmt=138861727&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9KYDlq_Oufx4kACBvjemZdMq8EtYULb6Do4nx1cI8pTp7I836wR2FYVXKaGljKkKw7dhrP4rAar_iPW6SzDs6rZ7ddJvdjMx5hOMwud49DBzR2v5yg&utm_content=138861727&utm_source=hs_email);
- <https://www.businessinsider.com/biden-traditional-infrastructure-bofa-republicans-roads-bridges-plan-package-bill-2021-4>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/24/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-support-for-the-bipartisan-infrastructure-framework/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/06/24/us/joe-biden-news>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/politics/house-infrastructure.html>
- <https://www.investopedia.com/taxes/trumps-tax-reform-plan-explained/#personal-taxes>
- <https://www.dallasfed.org/research/economics/2021/0415.aspx#:~:text=Early%20estimates%20indicate%20that%20the,direct%20and%20indirect%20economic%20loss.>
- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/camp-fire-by-the-numbers/>
- <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/06/multiple-climate-driven-disasters-in-the-midwest-and-globally.html>

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