



May 15, 2020

The Honorable Ned Lamont
Governor State of Connecticut
200 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: Investing in Transportation Infrastructure the Key to Economic Recovery and Growth

Dear Governor Lamont:

Connecticut is facing unparalleled challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we start to shift from our initial goal of staying safe and minimizing the spread of this virus, we will need to turn our focus toward the State's economic recovery. The federal government has dispersed trillions of dollars to citizens, public agencies and small businesses to help mitigate the financial challenges that we are all facing and reduce the potential for long-term economic effects likely in the form of a recession. As of today, Connecticut has received nearly 430,000 applications for unemployment benefits dating back to mid-March. We need to take action now to best position Connecticut's future.

It is well documented that an investment in infrastructure, specifically in transportation is a benefit for the immediate and long-term creation of jobs and overall economic growth. Multiple studies, including one by National Transportation Research Nonprofit (TRIP), have concluded that ***investing in our nation's surface transportation system and making needed highway improvements improves safety, generates jobs and fosters economic recovery and growth.*** Furthermore, investments in the surface transportation system will boost Connecticut's economy in the short-term by creating much needed design/construction jobs and in the long-term will enhance economic competitiveness, stimulate sustained job growth, improve access and mobility, improve traffic safety, reduce travel delays and improve road and bridge conditions. This should be the focus of our immediate attention.

The design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in Connecticut supports approximately 38,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy. Approximately 731,000 full-time jobs in Connecticut in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are heavily dependent on the state's transportation network. The better the infrastructure system, the more those industries will flourish.

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Rather than wait for an infrastructure-focused, federal stimulus package to rely upon for the creation of jobs, ***Connecticut should take the bold course of action of investing in transportation funding now and establish itself among the national leaders in this regard.*** We recommend that spending for transportation be increased beyond its current limit over a period of the next three years. Interest rates have not been this low in years and therefore this is an opportune time to make this wise investment. Engineers and transportation professionals in Connecticut can begin work immediately preparing for the upcoming stimulus funding which will result in thousands of construction jobs necessary to implement the work.

Your CT2030 Plan laid out for Connecticut a bold vision to relieve congestion and modernize our transportation system. Stimulus funding will not cover the costs necessary to deliver these critical transportation improvements. Federal stimulus funding will only assist the State in paying for the construction of these projects. Increased transportation spending today will position the State to maximize available funding and enable it to get these critical infrastructure-changing projects out to contractors, thereby creating jobs and helping the economic recovery advance faster than those states that are relying solely upon federal stimulus funding.

The last recession Connecticut faced lasted more than three years. The unemployment levels that we are currently facing are greater than three times that of our last recession. The increased unemployment rates have led to immediate decreases in tax revenues, creating budget shortfalls and uncertain economic outlooks. In light of these challenging economic times, it makes financial sense to focus on an investment in transportation. ***Increased spending on transportation will directly lead to getting people back to work thereby increasing tax revenue and shortening the economic recovery period.*** Jobs and the economy will remain a focus beyond the period of time that federal stimulus funding would cover. The State's focus on job creation and economic growth needs to remain and be directly linked to the investment in transportation. Continuing the focus on the CT2030 Plan will lead the State towards long term economic growth and help us recover faster than if these critical investments are not made.

The initial three years of increased spending for transportation, will provide time for the legislature to incorporate a long-term, reliable source of transportation revenue to sustain a state of good repair for our transportation system and provide monies necessary to continue the major capital investment in the CT2030 Plan.

ACEC remains a voice for the consulting engineers here in Connecticut, but the recommendations set forth in this letter are for the benefit of all the citizens in Connecticut. The focus on job creation and economic growth cannot be understated. These are unprecedented times and we, as a State, must remain vigilant in our focus towards economic recovery. An investment in our transportation system will significantly accelerate that outcome.

ACEC remains ready and willing to serve as a resource and/or assist as needed with this critical endeavor. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions or if ACEC can be of service.

Sincerely,

Michael McCarthy, President
American Council of Engineering Companies – Connecticut Chapter

cc: Speaker Joe Aresimowicz
Senator Martin Looney, President Pro Tempore
Senator Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader
Representative Matt Ritter, House Majority Leader
Senator Len Fasano, Senate Republican Leader
Representative Themis Klarides, House Minority Leader
Senator Carlo Leone, Senate Chair, Transportation Committee
Representative Roland Lemar, House Chair, Transportation Committee
Senator Henri Martin, Senate Ranking Member, Transportation Committee
Representative Laura Devlin, House Ranking Member, Transportation Committee
Senator John Fonfara, Senate Chair, Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee
Representative Jason Rojas, House Chair, Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee
Senator Kevin Witkos, Ranking Member, Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee &
Bonding Subcommittee
Representative Chris Davis, Ranking Member, Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee
Senator Marilyn Moore, Senator Chair, Bonding Subcommittee
Representative Patricia Billie Miller, House Chair, Bonding Subcommittee
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