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Congress Directs Next Area of Focus on National Infrastructure Needs

In the aftermath of the sweeping tax reform legislation that was passed in Washington at the end of 2017, manufacturers and businesses took the opportunity to address other areas in need of national attention: infrastructure.

As manufacturers are well aware, efficiency and reliability are the cornerstones to success in manufacturing excellence. One critical component of this, obviously, is delivery of our world class products. Therefore, manufacturers and businesses alike need an infrastructure system not only statewide but nationally, that can provide on-time deliveries of raw materials and component parts, both efficiently and safely. Additionally, if Internet accessibility lapses, if power goes down, or if water lines are ever to break, our manufacturing facilities and operations remain paralyzed and unable to produce. Therefore, overall infrastructure advancements remain a critical issue at the state and national level, and remain a top priority for MACNY and its members.

Our friends and colleagues over at the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) agree with us wholeheartedly, and in late December organized over 150 associations and groups from varied sectors in drafting and sending a letter to Congress urging them to address and pass a bipartisan bill focused on infrastructure in upcoming months. The letter addressed and outlined six goals that are critical to any comprehensive bill:

1. Increasing direct federal investments, in a broad range of infrastructure sectors over 10 years to achieve a \$1 trillion investment;
2. Complements and strengthens existing tools, such as municipal bonds, that successfully deliver infrastructure

- investments at the federal, state, and local levels;
3. Facilitates opportunities for private investment in U.S. infrastructure;
4. Creates efficiencies such as accelerating the federal permitting process;
5. Fixes chronic challenges and addresses reoccurring shortages in key federal infrastructure accounts such as the Highway Trust Fund, and;
6. Encourages active participation among all levels of government between the public and private sectors without shifting federal responsibilities because no single partner can deliver a well-functioning, national U.S. infrastructure network driven by a long-term vision and funding stability.

Just as was emphasized in the tax reform, the critical and quite frankly only way that sound infrastructure policy is going to be passed is if it receives bipartisan support and engagement. In early January, a group of Congressional Representatives from both sides of the aisle released a statement addressing this very same issue. Calling themselves the Problem Solvers Caucus Working Group, this bipartisan group of 48 Representatives – comprised of half Republicans and half Democrats - have come together to not only address their commitment to addressing and passing a comprehensive infrastructure bill, but doing so collaboratively, and with colleagues from both sides of the aisle. MACNY has always maintained that bipartisanship is a critical component to the entire democratic process, and recently applauded Congressman John Katko, who is one of the founding members of the group. In a statement made by the Problem Solvers Caucus Working Group addressing the infrastructure policy commitment, MACNY President and CEO, Randy Wolken, gave the following statement of support:

Manufacturers and businesses need an updated and modern infrastructure system to remain competitive in our global economy. Investments in innovative infrastructure advancements will help in our transporting of goods and quality products, allowing our sector to become even stronger and more competitive on a global level. I would like to extend my gratitude to Congressman Katko for his continued support for infrastructure investments on behalf of our region and sector.

MACNY will continue to work with our elected officials, our partner organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers, and of course our membership, on bringing clear and concise ideas to the table as infrastructure continues to be addressed on the state and national level. If you have any input, questions, or comments on this, please feel free to contact me at kburns@macny.org.