

# John Mielke: Investing in infrastructure is investing in America

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As America continues to reel from the economic and very personal pain inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin – representing nearly 900 companies in the construction industry – joins many of our industry colleagues in calling for new investment to rebuild our country's infrastructure.

We believe investing in infrastructure is investing in America, and we believe Congress should act to enhance the safety and security of our country and help restore our economy to its pre-pandemic might. This is one of the few important issues that President Donald Trump and Democratic congressional leaders agree upon, and it is a winning proposition for all Americans.

Of course, details for such a plan matter, and when the time comes, there can be a spirited debate about funding sources and whether roads or rails, ports or airports, and residential or commercial will be included. The current U.S. Senate surface transportation reauthorization and water infrastructure legislation provides a path forward on the essential infrastructure that is needed to restart the economy.

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We understand this type of investment benefits the companies performing the work. More importantly, however, this is an investment in the hundreds of thousands of men and women who would use their skills to address our country's infrastructure woes, which have been neglected for far too long. This is a chance to create new career opportunities in an essential industry where the need for skilled

workers continues to grow.

Regardless of the final plan, the result should be taxpayer-funded projects with the appropriate standards for safety and quality, which facilitate and sustain long-term economic growth, embrace new technology and achieve value-added public-private partnerships.

— *Mielke is president, Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin.*