



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

**Your Comprehensive
Public Works Resource**

www.apwa.org

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July 8, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
U.S. House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
U.S. House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: APWA FY26 Appropriations Priorities for Emergency Management, Transportation, Water, and Workforce Development

Dear Chairman Cole, Chair Collins, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Ranking Member Murray,

The American Public Works Association (APWA) represents 32,000 public works professionals across North America who serve in both the public and private sectors providing expertise at the local, state and federal government levels. Working in the public interest, our members plan, design, build, operate, and maintain, America's vast infrastructure network that is so fundamental to our economy, environment, public health, and safety.

For FY 2026, APWA strongly recommends your committees support following public works and infrastructure priorities.

General Priorities

APWA applauded the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the \$1.2 trillion federal investment over 5 years demonstrates an important bipartisan commitment and partnership among the local, state, and federal levels of government. IIJA increased transportation funding by 50% and water infrastructure program funding by 80%. We must keep this momentum by making sure the investments for these important programs are implemented as intended by Congress. To do this, APWA urges the committees to:

PRESIDENT
Dominick A. Longobardi

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson, CAE



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- Maintain appropriated funding levels to continue providing programmatic stability. When program funding is unreliable, communities may have to make the difficult decision to postpone projects because they cannot afford to make up for the lost federal investment.
- Appropriate the long-term infrastructure funding in FY26 appropriations.

Continuing to invest in our critical emergency preparedness, transportation, and water infrastructure will protect our nation's public health, safety, and our environment.

APWA supports President Trump's proposal to add new funding and staff to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementation Program. While the White House Council on Environmental Quality found that the timeline for completing the NEPA process has significantly decreased over the last 20 years, it still takes on average two years from a Notice of Intent to a Record of Decision for a Final Environmental Impact Statement. APWA asks the committees to:

- Include the proposed \$1.2 million and 17.9 FTEs for NEPA review at EPA in the Congressional FY26 budget.
- Add similar increases for permitting divisions across all agencies.

We have heard many examples of the impacts slow permitting, including from a community that was forced to return federal construction funding because additional steps extended the project beyond the deadline of their grant. Having adequate staffing can help decrease the backlog of applications and ensure important infrastructure projects happen in a timely manner.

Additionally, APWA supports the use of municipal bonds and restoring the ability for state and local governments to issue tax-exempt advance refunding bonds in lowering the total cost of bond funded infrastructure. Tax-exempt bonds are the primary mechanism through which state and local governments raise capital to finance a wide range of essential public projects. In 2023, over \$350 billion worth of municipal bonds were issued and using tax-exempt municipal bonds saved tax and ratepayers over \$18 billion between 2007 and 2017. We urge your committees to exclude any language that removes municipal bonds' tax-exempt status.

Emergency Management Priorities

When disasters occur, public works professionals are often the first to respond and the last to leave. As first responders, public works serves a vital role in ensuring national critical infrastructure functions during emergencies. We appreciate the House Appropriations Committee including language to restore the recently discontinued Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC) grant program, as well as the appropriation of \$31.8 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) and robust funding for the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

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(HMGP). These grants are essential for states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation projects. APWA also requests:

- The Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) be funded at least \$3 billion in FY26, which is consistent with current funding levels. CISA ensures that public works professionals have the resources to avoid, react to, and anticipate cybersecurity threats.
- The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Weather Service (NWS) be funded at least \$6 billion, which is consistent with the current funding levels. The research NOAA and NWS do is critical to tracking dangerous weather events that provide public works professionals notice to prepare for natural disasters.
- Funding for government-wide programs that provide emergency communications training for public works professionals and funding for the implementation of these systems. Full funding for the Safeguarding Tomorrow Through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act. These programs provide funding to local governments for projects that reduce risks to homeowners, businesses, non-profit organizations, and communities.

The federal government has consistently recognized the crucial role public works professionals play as first responders. Full funding for these agencies and programs helps public works agencies carry out their life-protecting responsibilities and supports both state and local disaster preparedness and recovery.

Transportation Priorities

APWA's transportation priorities strongly support improving the safety and resilience of our transportation network and continuing to reduce deaths and injuries on our roadways. The substantial increased investments authorized by the IIJA and supported in the President's FY 2026 budget proposal for the Department of Transportation are critical to protecting the traveling public and the safety professionals who operate and maintain our transportation network. APWA backs transportation programs supporting safety improvements to local and rural roads, work zones, traffic incident management practices, public transit, railroads and railroad crossings.

Specifically, APWA supports funding for the following Transportation programs for FY26:

- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) which provides funding for local governments to develop comprehensive safety action plans and implement projects and strategies to address these roadway safety issues with the goal of protecting all users from injury and death.
- The Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative Efficient Cost Saving Transportation (PROTECT) program strengthens and protects evacuation routes, addresses vulnerabilities, and increases the resilience of surface transportation infrastructure from the impacts of flooding, wildfires, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters.

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- The Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grants, which support demonstration projects to advance smart community technologies and systems to improve transportation safety and efficiency.
- The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program supporting infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impact.

Additionally, APWA opposes any effort to increase truck size and length and urges the rejection of any language in FY 2026 appropriations that would increase maximum truck weight or length limits on federal highways. A U.S. Department of Transportation study found that allowing heavier and longer truck configurations on interstates and U.S. highways would result in billions of dollars in damage to both roads and bridges.

Water Priorities

APWA members include large and small, urban and rural areas in providing our water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater management, drainage and flood control systems. Our nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure programs are essential to the health and wellbeing of every American and access to these services and systems safeguards public health. All communities rely on federal investment to help support these important projects. With that in mind, APWA urges the committees to:

- Fully fund the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) at \$3.25 billion each and maintain the existing Congressionally appropriated FY25 funding. The flexibility of this program allows communities of all sizes to finance critical projects they could otherwise not afford without federal support and the programs' low interest rates and loan forgiveness have saved communities up to \$969 million over the life of the loan compared to the market rate.
- Fully fund the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) at \$75.6 million and maintain the existing Congressionally appropriated FY25 funding. Due to its low interest rates, WIFIA loans save on average \$1 billion in interest over the life of the loans.
- Maintain funding for water and wastewater loans and grant programs through the Rural Utilities Service at \$478.5 million. These programs exclusively serve communities of 10,000 or less in population and have proven to be the most effective mechanism for funding rural water and wastewater infrastructure in the country.

Water infrastructure is a good investment with every dollar providing up to a \$3.28 return on investment. Without funding for these projects, nearly 40,000 jobs and \$6.47 billion in economic output could be lost.

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Workforce Development

Public works professionals are tasked with building, operating, and maintaining our nation's vast infrastructure systems but that workforce is aging and not achieving a full rate of replacement. This puts a strain on employees who, in many instances, must perform double duty merely to maintain basic operations. APWA supports:

- The maintenance of dedicated and full federal funding for workforce programs supporting the emergency management, transportation, and water industries.
- The expansion of the definition of public works from IJJA to include all parts of the public works system. Doing so will help ensure that public works entities are specified as eligible to receive federal funding and training critical to their responsibilities and continued success.

As the leader in public works education and credentialing programs, APWA knows that training and continuing education are a critical component in shoring up our nation's public works workforce. By providing targeted funding to these training and apprenticeship programs, we can help to recruit, train, and retain the frontline workers operating and maintaining our infrastructure.

Conclusion

Each of these programs are vital to protecting our country's public health and safety and promoting economic growth. On behalf of our members, we thank you for your attention and consideration. APWA stands ready to work with you and your staff on our common goals. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of our priorities. If you have questions, please contact APWA's Director of Government and Public Affairs, Andrea Eales, at aeales@apwa.org or 202-218-6730.

Sincerely,

Dominick A. Longobardi
APWA President

Scott D. Grayson, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

cc:

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

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House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
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