

Will Politics Erode Infrastructure Standards?

August 2022

In response to Allen Adams' letter published in the October 2022 issue of *Informed Infrastructure*, which was in response to the editorial "Will Politics Erode Infrastructure Standards?", it is important to provide clarity that the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed in 2021 is indeed dedicated to traditional core infrastructure—about half of the investment goes to roads, bridges and transit systems; 6 percent to water infrastructure; 3 percent to our nation's airports; and so on.

The bill addresses all 17 categories of infrastructure included in the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure (www.infrastructurereportcard.org).

The letter also submits that societies such as ASCE should push for the advancement of standards and proper spending. Indeed, ASCE has published more than 70 standards, all of which support responsible spending through efficient practices and resilient materials. Our standards, most notably ASCE 7, have helped improve design and building standards throughout the country, and areas that have implemented these standards have had far better outcomes than those that don't when severe weather or other

disasters take place. Such improved building and design saves lives, in addition to money in the long-term, and thus our technical standards are a key component of our advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and in state houses across the nation. According to the Rockefeller Foundation, "it costs 50 percent more to rebuild in the wake of a disaster than to build the infrastructure to withstand the shock."

ASCE also has hundreds of policies for guiding infrastructure dialog and best practices. One such policy calls for system-wide lifecycle cost analysis to be a part of every new or renewed infrastructure project and to continuously seek new and improved methods and materials to cut down costs. The policy also calls for using well-conceived plans that complement a national vision and focus on system-wide metrics to ensure that all components of the built environment are developed cohesively.

Infrastructure investment must always be done through efficient practices and with a sustainable, resilient and long-term vision in mind, and ASCE will remain diligent in promoting best practices for the public and engineering community.

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