



A bold voice for transportation workers

December 7, 2011

Support the Invest in American Jobs Act of 2011

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to cosponsor the Invest in American Jobs Act of 2011 (H.R. 3533), introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Nick Rahall. This important legislation creates strong Buy America standards that will ensure that investments in our nation's transportation infrastructure will grow and sustain domestic manufacturing and the millions of jobs the sector supports.

A strong transportation system and a strong manufacturing sector are intrinsically linked. Particularly at a time when our economy continues to struggle and unemployment remains high, it is sound economic policy to make substantial investments in our nation's infrastructure. Repairing our deteriorating transit, aviation, highway, bridge, rail and port and maritime systems will help put millions to work while improving a national infrastructure system that the World Economic Forum recently ranked an embarrassing 16th best in the world. To maximize the impact of these investments, it makes sense that we use American-made steel, iron and manufactured goods. This will not only increase the number of jobs created by federal investments in infrastructure, but will also ensure that we have a robust manufacturing sector able to supply the products needed by private and public transportation employers.

Existing Buy America requirements are specific to each agency, creating a myriad of policies that are inconsistently applied to various modes of transportation. These policies too often include broadly applied waiver provisions which lack accountability and decrease the effectiveness of Buy America requirements and the economic impact of federal investment. H.R. 3533 addresses these deficiencies by strengthening, harmonizing and appropriately expanding existing Buy America provisions.

Specifically, the bill strengthens the waiver provisions to ensure that they are awarded only when truly warranted and with full transparency. It requires Federal agencies to post any proposed waiver online, provide a detailed justification for the waiver, and offer the American public an opportunity to comment prior to taking effect. Agencies will also be required to publish annual reports which provide justifications for waivers issued, compare the amount of funds used on both domestic and foreign manufactured goods, and provide an employment impact analysis of the cumulative effect of waivers issued in the previous year. Annual reports will make the Buy America waiver process more accountable, and help identify areas where we can strengthen our domestic manufacturing sector.

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



H.R. 3533 also prevents state and local governments from segmenting projects that receive federal funds in order to bypass Buy America requirements. The State of California recently segmented the East Span project of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge into 20 separate construction contracts, and in doing so was able to procure 43,000 tons of Chinese-made steel despite receiving over \$320 million in Federal funds. This bill will prevent this type of segmentation, and will help create American jobs by ensuring that state and local governments cannot pick and choose which contracts are subject to Buy America, and which ones are not.

Finally, H.R. 3533 expands these strong Buy America requirements to other federal investment programs, including the rail infrastructure grants, loans, and loan guarantees, Clean Water State Revolving Fund grants, Federal Emergency Management Agency grants and Economic Development Administration Grants. By applying Buy America to all transportation agencies and expanding the reach of these laws to other federal investment programs, this bill removes the ambiguity of having agency-specific requirements, and creates a clear and consistent Buy America law for federal investment in transportation. H.R. 3533 is indeed the most comprehensive Buy America legislation that the House of Representatives has considered to date.

The American people need a commitment from their government that U.S. federal investments will create the greatest possible economic impact and support U.S. job growth. H.R. 3533 is a recognition of that commitment, and ensures that expenditures on transportation projects will be used to purchase U.S.-made materials, manufactured goods, and equipment, create American jobs, and help rebuild our domestic manufacturing sector. I urge you to cosponsor the Invest in American Jobs Act, and push for its inclusion in any transportation investment legislation considered by the House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President