



IBEW POLICY BRIEF

Chapter 10: Transportation

The IBEW sees the electrification of the transportation sector as a significant growth area for current and future members. As such, the IBEW supports policies that ensure it will continue to provide union jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits.

According to the Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990–2021 (the national inventory that the U.S. prepares annually under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), transportation accounted for the largest portion of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2021 at 29 percent.⁵ Nearly 58 percent of all transportation sector emissions come from light-duty vehicles. The U.S. will only meet its emissions reduction targets by electrifying the transportation sector. This is one reason the IBEW sees transportation electrification as a vital opportunity to modernize the nation's infrastructure, reinvigorate the U.S. manufacturing sector, and provide good-paying union jobs.

EV Infrastructure Policies

The electrification of the nation's vehicle fleet will require significant investment in new charging infrastructure and substantial upgrades to electrical generation and transmission systems. The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) estimates that 9.6 million charging ports must be installed by 2030 to meet the growing demand for electric vehicles. This investment will include thousands of non-residential charging ports in office buildings, parking lots, on-street parking, and interstate service stops.

⁵ Fast Facts on Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions (October 31, 2023)
<https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/fast-facts-transportation-greenhouse-gas-emissions#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Inventory%20of,U.S.%20GHG%20emissions%20in%202021>

The IBEW supports policies that ensure contractors use appropriately qualified and trained electricians on all federally funded electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects. Such policies include requirements for electricians to be trained and certified by the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP). EVITP certification requirements ensure that federally funded EV charging infrastructure is built out quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively. IBEW has already certified over 25,000 electricians through EVITP, and more are being certified continuously nationwide.

Strong labor standards like those outlined in EVITP are crucial to creating a pipeline of electricians and other skilled construction labor to build a low-carbon energy infrastructure, while the associated Buy America requirements are helping to jumpstart our nation's manufacturing sector, putting Americans to work. These requirements ensure contractors building EV charging infrastructure have a competent workforce that can provide an efficient and cost-effective project.

The IBEW further supports policies allowing electric utility companies to build charging stations in their service areas including rural and historically disadvantaged communities.

The IBEW supports inclusion of EVITP requirements in all future regulations related to electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Transmission Required to Support EV Network

The IBEW also supports investments in significant upgrades to the electric grid and other electrical generation improvements. Grid investment will also be necessary to support the millions of charging stations installed in the coming years. In addition, the United States will need to invest \$30-90 billion in electric transmission above current investments and generate 70-200 gigawatts in additional power generation to meet electrical demand by 2030.

The IBEW supports federal policies that will facilitate the construction of new transmission lines. Our advocacy efforts include "right-sizing" by incentivizing transmission capacity development over current market demands. The IBEW also recognizes the need for permitting reform to make it easier to build transmission lines. Without adequate transmission infrastructure, the U.S. will continue to fall behind in delivering renewable energy from solar and wind-heavy regions to population centers.

Railroad Policies

The IBEW supports infrastructure investments that include funding for high-speed rail and the electrification of our nation's railroad network. IBEW policies support existing Amtrak routes and the creation of new networks. The electrification of our railroad network would modernize the current system and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the IBEW supports investment in public transportation systems including subways, light rail, and commuter rail. World-class public transportation systems would help reduce the number of cars on the road, lowering emissions while improving local economies and creating family-supporting jobs.

Congress must ensure rail investments protect, preserve, and grow good-paying union jobs. Diversity of transportation can handle many of the hard questions we face, including limited access to vital services and lack of opportunities for many in rural America.

The IBEW is opposed to efforts in the railroad industry to place profits above the safety of IBEW railroad members. The IBEW advocates for the ability of employers to pursue precision, profitability, and efficiency in operations. However, Class I freight rail carriers have proven Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) is not a lean or streamlined business model. Instead, PSR is a dangerous cost-cutting scheme to lower operating ratios and appease investors through shareholder value resulting from devastating cuts to the workforce and degradation of the industry's safety culture.

IBEW supports the REEF Act (Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness Act). This bipartisan bill would eliminate sequester cuts to railroad unemployment and sickness benefits that have unfairly shortchanged railroad workers and their families for over a decade.

IBEW railroad workers are critical to keeping the passenger and freight rail network safe and our economy moving. They deserve to access the full value of the benefits they have earned. Currently, Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) benefits are the only federal unemployment insurance and sickness benefits program subject to sequestration. No other American's unemployment, disability, or sickness benefits are subject to the same cuts. The IBEW urges Congress to pass the REEF Act to enact this bipartisan and common-sense reform.

Rail Safety

With over 1,000 freight rail derailments annually and worsening safety records, the IBEW urges Congress to pass a comprehensive rail safety bill to address persistent industry problems and prevent further harm to communities and workers. We urge Congress to support the bipartisan Railway Safety Act as amended and approved recently by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. This bill would prohibit railroads from placing impossible time constraints on railcar and locomotive inspectors and require frequent locomotive and railcar safety inspections.

IBEW leadership has worked hard to secure four sick days for our Class I railroaders. It acknowledges this massive accomplishment but understands members deserve far more. The IBEW supports administrative and congressional action to provide all railroaders with at least seven paid sick leave days. The lack of this benefit is appalling, especially with approximately 43 percent of the workforce furloughed.

The industry has exacerbated this issue by implementing Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR). Before this operating model, railroaders in severe need could "call in" without pay. Now, railroaders cannot exercise their right to utilize their health care benefits, and management disciplines workers for taking this action. As a result, railroaders are left without any time off to tend to their families and personal needs. Furthermore, rail workers are often forced to work overtime because of the short staffing of qualified electrical workers.

The 117th Congress proposed H. Con. Res. 119, aiming to grant railroad workers seven days of paid sick leave, but the bill did not pass. Despite this setback, the IBEW continues to urge support for initiatives advocating paid sick leave for rail workers. IBEW supports the Freight Rail Workforce Health and Safety Act, the Rail Worker and Community Safety Act, and the Healthy Families Act.

Railroad Decarbonization

The IBEW strongly supports the Biden-Harris administration's ambitious goals to confront global climate change. Electrifying the U.S. rail network is the most promising means of achieving one of these goals: net-zero rail emissions by 2050. Globally, many countries, including those considered adversaries of the U.S., have proved the expansion of rail electrification can reduce emissions in the transportation sector.

- Electrified rail is the most energy-efficient rail propulsion technology
- Electrification of the rail network would allow the utility's new transmission corridors to modernize and integrate the grid further
- Electrification of the rail network would allow utility companies to connect renewable energy projects like solar and wind farms to the grid and transmit electricity virtually anywhere connected by the rail network
- Railroads could sell excess electricity back to utility companies
- Railroads can reach cost-sharing arrangements with cable and internet companies who could use railroads' rights-of-way to expand their networks and bring high-speed internet to virtually every part of the U.S.

Due to the inevitable shift to electric rail, there will be an increased demand for electricians to maintain electric locomotives and the catenary system. These electricians will need training to ensure they are qualified.



The IBEW already partners with utility companies and electrical contractors to provide world-class training to ensure workers are qualified and equipped with the skills necessary to perform their duties at an exceptional level. IBEW apprenticeship programs provide flexible training that combines job-related technical instruction with on-the-job experience, allowing apprentices to earn while they learn. Upon completing a multi-year apprenticeship, IBEW electricians are among the world's best-trained and most qualified electricians. They remain the most qualified workforce to modernize our rail systems.

Pending Priorities

- Applying the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) credential to any program that incentivizes the buildout of electric vehicle supply equipment
- Ensuring contractors must compete for work based on who can best train, equip, and manage a construction crew by applying Davis-Bacon prevailing wages on projects
- Honoring the safety standards, training programs, compensation, and benefits that workers are entitled to through registered apprenticeship programs
- Including those who have historically faced barriers to employment as prospective job candidates by promoting innovative workforce policies such as Community Benefits Agreements

- Opposing railway labor law carve-outs by establishing periodic locomotive inspections as necessary for the safe operations of locomotives to be completed by qualified mechanical inspectors only
- Supporting passage of the Railroad Employee Equality and Fairness (REEF) Act that would end sequestration on railroad unemployment and sickness benefits
- Enforcing Buy America conditions on rolling stock
- Advocating for all existing programs, DERA, FHWA congestion mitigation, and air quality improvement grants, and any rail or FTA infrastructure grants provided federal dollars to have high road labor standards, in the absence of an all encompassing federal dollar labor standard (Davis-Bacon coverage does not constitute high road labor standards in the rail industry)
- Veterans who are currently working as railroaders covered under the Railway Labor Act, should be entitled to sickness and workers compensation benefits without disruption of their existing Military Retirement and or Military Reservist Pay
- The IBEW has advocated for various high road labor standards in the rail industry including:
 - Davis-Bacon prevailing wages and benefits
 - PLAs for construction and maintenance
 - No mandatory arbitration
 - Strong worker classification standards to avoid misclassification
 - Ban on use of temporary staffing agencies
 - Explicit neutrality policy on all collective bargaining
 - 13c protections for transit workers
 - RLA protections for workers
 - No displacement of workers already employed in the sector because of federal investment
- Ensuring a robust and competitive domestic shipbuilding industry is a critical policy priority as it directly contributes to the creation and preservation of skilled jobs, fosters economic resilience, and bolsters national security by maintaining a self-reliant and strategically positioned maritime infrastructure

Chapter Resources

Hyperlink	URL	QR
Transportation Funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Resources:		
DOT RAISE tool	https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a	
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Resources:		
Guidance Memo NEVI	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alter-native-fuel-corridors/nominations/90d_nevi_formula_program_guidance.pdf	

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