



# IBEW POLICY BRIEF

## Chapter 16: 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 will ensure it will continue to provide union jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits.

The transportation sector accounted for the most significant portion (29 percent) of total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States in 2017. Nearly 60 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. The IBEW sees transportation electrification as a vital opportunity that provides for modernizing the nation's infrastructure, reinvigorating the U.S. manufacturing sector, and providing well-paying union jobs.

### Recent Developments

#### Transportation Funding

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) contains \$643 billion in transportation infrastructure funding, including:

- \$8 billion for the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Program, which supports freight and highway projects of regional and national significance
- \$7.5 billion for RAISE Grants or the Rebuild American Infrastructure Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program
  - This competitive grant program provides funding for road, rail, transit, and other surface transportation projects with significant local or regional impact. Selection criteria include safety, sustainability, equity, economic competitiveness, mobility, and community connectivity
  - The U.S. Department of Transportation recently announced that \$1.5 billion in RAISE discretionary grants are available,<sup>11</sup> representing a 50-percent increase in funds over the prior year

<sup>11</sup> RAISE Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (Feb. 4, 2022), <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-02/FINAL-2022-RAISE-NOFO.pdf>.

- At least \$15 million in RAISE funding is guaranteed to go toward projects in areas of persistent poverty or historically disadvantaged communities. DOT has launched a tool (see chapter resources) that shows whether a project location is considered a historically disadvantaged community.
- \$5 Billion in funding for Megaprojects is available under the National Infrastructure Project Assistance program. This program provides grants on a competitive basis to support multijurisdictional or regional projects of significance that may also cut across multiple modes of transportation. As a result, communities can apply for funding to complete large critical projects that would otherwise be unachievable.
- Port investments
  - The BIL includes several investments to decrease emissions and upgrade and modernize America's ports, including:
    - \$2.25 billion for the Port Infrastructure Development Program
    - \$150 million aimed at reducing truck idling at port facilities
    - \$25 million for America's Marine Highway Program
    - \$2.25 million for modernization at land ports
- Congress included the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program in the BIL. It is a \$7.5 billion investment to help make EV chargers accessible to all Americans. The NEVI Formula Program will provide dedicated funding to states to build infrastructure under Davis-Bacon prevailing wage standards.
  - The Government Affairs Department advocated through formal written comments to include the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) in the guidance. EVITP will ensure that the contractors must train the workforce in high-quality programs.
- Also included are Rail Improvement Investments, which authorized \$78 billion in spending over the next five years. The uses for this funding include projects that improve rail infrastructure projects. It consists of \$36 billion on rail alone, \$28 billion on multimodal and freight and \$13 billion on safety initiatives. The reauthorization included several historical rail programs, such as:
  - Amtrak intercity passenger and NEC programs
  - Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grants
  - Federal-state partnership for intercity passenger rail grants

## EV Infrastructure Policies

The electrification of the nation's vehicle fleet will require significant investment in new charging infrastructure and substantial upgrades to the electrical generation and transmission systems. The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) estimates that 9.6 million charging ports will need to 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.

The IBEW supports policies that ensure that the members of the IBEW install electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE). The IBEW advocated for including requirements that appropriately qualified and trained electricians to perform EVSE installations. Such policies include provisions for electricians performing EVSE installations to be certified by an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) certification or another EVSE-specific training course offered through an electrical Registered Apprenticeship Program. Such policies are already in place in California and Nevada. These requirements ensure that contractors building EV charging infrastructure has a competent workforce, providing for 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. EVITP certification requirements can ensure that the EV charging infrastructure federal investment provides is built out quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively.

In addition, the IBEW supports investments in significant upgrades to the electric grid and other electrical generation improvements. Grid investment will also be necessary to keep 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.<sup>12</sup>

The IBEW supports federal policies that will facilitate the construction of new transmission lines. Our advocacy efforts include "right-sizing" by incentivizing the development of transmission capacity 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. The IBEW supports an all-of-the-above energy strategy to ensure sufficient baseload generation and grid reliability.

## **Railroad Policies**

The IBEW supports infrastructure investments that include funding for high-speed rail and the electrification of our nation's passenger railroad network. IBEW policies support the creation of both existing Amtrak routes and 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 the hard questions we face, including the limited access to opportunity and vital services for many in rural America.

---

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Jurgen Weiss, et. al, The Coming Electrification of the North American Economy, (2019) at 16-17, <https://wiresgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2019-03-06-Brattle-Group-The-Coming-Electrification-of-the-NA-Economy.pdf>.

U.S. history is punctuated with federal investment to achieve significant advancements in our infrastructure. For example, constructing a rail system that would span the United States required federal support through the Pacific Railway Act of 1862. However, the economic potential realized through high-speed rail investments largely depends on the labor standards placed on the money used.

The IBEW is opposed to efforts in the railroad industry that places 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 that 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 devastating cuts to the workforce and a degradation in the safety culture throughout the industry.

### **Sick Days for Railroad Workers**

The IBEW supports administrative and Congressional action to provide railroaders with paid sick leave, which U.S. railroad workers are currently not provided. On its own, the lack of this benefit is appalling. This issue has been exacerbated by the industry's implementation of PSR. Before the operating model, railroaders could “call in” without pay in times of severe need. Now, railroaders are disciplined when taking this action. As a result, railroaders are left without any time off to tend to their families and needs.

However, the 117th Congress introduced H. Con. Res. 119, which sought to provide railroad workers with seven (7) days of paid sick leave. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass. Despite the inability of IBEW railroad members to fail to achieve sick time, the IBEW is continuing to work on this issue. The department is seeking a way to continue this effort through an executive order.

### **Shipbuilding Policies**


The Jones Act states that ships sailing between two domestic ports of call within the United States, Puerto Rico and Hawaii, must be U.S. flagged, U.S. built, and U.S. crewed. The IBEW is opposed to any efforts to repeal this critical law. The Jones Act ensures a vibrant domestic maritime industry, rebuilding the American fleet and protecting national security. Any attempts to subvert this 100-year-old law undermine the hard-fought working conditions, pay and benefits in the U.S. maritime sector in favor of exploitative foreign competitors.

### **Pending Priorities**

- Applying the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) credential to any program that incentivizes the build-out of electric vehicle supply equipment
- Ensuring that 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 the use of 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 efforts for railway labor law carve-outs
  - Ensuring that a qualified mechanical inspector performs periodic inspections are performed as necessary, and only by a qualified mechanical inspector, for the safe operations of locomotives
- 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 materials
- In the absence of an all encompassing, federal dollar blanket labor standard;
  - All existing programs DERA, FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Grants and any Rail or FTA infrastructure Grants provided federal dollars must have highroad labor standards. (Davis-Bacon coverage is not adequate to constitute *highroad* labor standards in the rail industry)
- The IBEW has advocated for various highroad labor standards in the rail industry, including:
  - Davis-Bacon prevailing wages and benefits
  - PLA's for the construction and maintenance
  - No mandatory arbitration
  - Strong worker classification standards to avoid misclassification
  - Ban the use of temporary staffing agencies
  - Explicit neutrality policy on all collective bargaining
  - 13c protections for transit workers
  - RLA protections for workers under the RLA
  - Ensure that federal investment will not displace workers already employed in this sector

### Chapter Resources

Hyperlink	URL	QR
Transportation Funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL):		
<a href="#">DOT RAISE tool</a>	<a href="https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboard/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a">https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboard/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a</a>	
National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program Guidance:		
<a href="#">Guidance Memo NEVI</a>	<a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/nominations/90d_nevi_formula_program_guidance.pdf">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/nominations/90d_nevi_formula_program_guidance.pdf</a>	