



International Union of Operating Engineers

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

November 28, 2017

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

JAMES T. CALLAHAN
GENERAL PRESIDENT

Dear Senator Brown:

The International Union of Operating Engineers supports your Bridge Investment Act, legislation designed to help repair and replace the nation's dilapidated, faltering bridges. We appreciate your leadership on essential legislation to rebuild America's transportation infrastructure.

The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) is one of North America's leading construction unions, representing nearly 400,000 hardworking men and women in the United States and Canada. Most members of the IUOE work in the construction sector, operating and maintaining heavy equipment, in addition to other occupations in the industry. Every day thousands of members of the Operating Engineers are employed building the nation's roads, bridges, highways, and other transportation infrastructure.

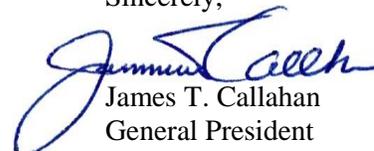
According to the Department of Transportation, there are currently 55,710 structurally-deficient bridges and an even bigger number of functionally-obsolete bridges. The problem clearly demands a solution. The Bridge Investment Act is part of the answer. Your legislation invests \$75 billion of *new* dollars over the next ten years in a competitive grant program that will address our country's crumbling bridges.

To take one example, in 2013 the Skagit River Bridge on Interstate 5 collapsed in Washington State. The bridge had surpassed its 50-year expected lifespan and was rated as functionally obsolete. Luckily, there were no fatalities. We have not been as fortunate in other bridge-collapse events. The Skagit River Bridge collapse presented a catastrophic, longer-term economic problem for the region. A key commercial artery of the national highway system had been severed – an artery that links Canada to the Puget Sound. Needless to say, the collapse caused delays in the movement of goods and people in one of North America's most important freight corridors. Crumbling infrastructure must not be allowed to hold back America's prosperity, opportunity, and jobs. The Bridge Investment Act offers the nation the chance to turn around this dismal trend.

The International Union of Operating Engineers proudly endorses the Bridge Investment Act, and we look forward to working with you to enact it into law in this session of Congress.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical public-safety and economic issue.

Sincerely,



James T. Callahan
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