August 16, 2021

Dear Democratic Colleague:

It is critical for House Democrats to deliver on the promises President Biden and Congressional Democrats made in the Build Back Better agenda. This is our opportunity to strengthen the COVID-ravaged economy, create jobs, and help Americans afford the rising cost of living by expanding the Biden Child Tax Credit, child care, paid family and medical leave, universal pre-K, workforce development, education, climate programs, housing and other initiatives. In order to do so, the House must pass a budget resolution next week.

As Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I advanced legislation (the INVEST in America Act, H.R. 3684) through the House in early July to meet one of these key goals—decisive action on climate change. The INVEST in America Act delivers meaningful, transformational policy solutions and resources for states and communities to tackle transportation greenhouse gas emissions, the leading cause of U.S. carbon pollution, and to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis.

Unfortunately, the Senate's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (bipartisan infrastructure bill), negotiated by 20 Senators outside of the normal committee process, falls short on many priorities of the House carried in the INVEST in America Act, including meaningfully addressing climate change.

That's why ensuring a bicameral reconciliation process, with true input from the House prior to the passage of any final infrastructure legislation, is essential. The final reconciliation package to advance critical Democratic priorities on infrastructure and other areas will be strengthened by a negotiation that allows House Members to advocate for the priorities of this body.

The Senate has had unilateral control over the infrastructure bill. If we want House priorities to be considered, we cannot let the same thing happen in reconciliation. But giving the House a voice requires all members of the House Democratic Caucus to work together and take the first step—enacting a budget resolution so that we can put forth a House reconciliation bill that elevates House priorities.

In reconciliation, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will work to remedy the largest flaws of the Senate's bipartisan infrastructure bill. I intend to focus on programs that reduce

carbon emissions from surface transportation, aviation and ports, restore transit funding, reconnect neighborhoods, robustly fund high-speed rail, and ensure climate-resilient and affordable investments in our crumbling wastewater infrastructure.

I also want House members to be aware that I am still committed to finding a path forward on Member Designated Projects, which should not be confused with Community Funded Projects that are currently being considered through the appropriations process. The Senate infrastructure bill has multiple carve outs throughout that benefit targeted states. The 1,475 projects contained in the INVEST in America Act would instead direct funding in an equitable manner to congressional districts across the country. Every member—whether junior or senior, whether Democrat or Republican—had equal access to participate in this process and to bring badly-needed transportation resources to their communities. Defending these very tangible House investments as the process advances is a top priority.

I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of a budget resolution, and maintaining pressure to preserve a House voice as this legislative process plays out. Working together we can deliver a robust Build Back Better agenda to benefit the American people.

Sincerely,

Peter A. DeFazio
Chair
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure