

Davis, Cicilline, Larsen, Young, push bipartisan IMAGINE Act to boost American infrastructure

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Reps. Rodney Davis (R-IL), David Cicilline (D-RI), Rick Larsen (D-WA), and Don Young (R-AK) introduced the Innovative Materials for America's Growth and Infrastructure Newly Expanded (IMAGINE) Act to help develop cutting-edge materials that could vastly improve infrastructure nationwide. Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) have introduced the Senate version of the bill.

"Addressing our crumbling infrastructure is long overdue," said Davis. "Congress should encourage more innovation as we invest in rebuilding our infrastructure and that's exactly what the IMAGINE Act does. Finding new, more resilient materials will help tax dollars go further and our infrastructure catch up to 21st century transportation needs."

“Infrastructure is the foundation that connects our businesses, communities and people in the state of Illinois,” said Marsia Geldert-Murphey, PE, Region 7 Director, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). “It affects us all every single day from the air we breathe, to the roads we drive, and the water we drink. Illinois received a “C-” on the ASCE 2018 Illinois Infrastructure Report Card, meaning it is barely in mediocre condition, and requires immediate attention. The IMAGINE Act is a critical first step in improving our nation’s infrastructure. From a local perspective, Illinois’ bridges, highways, transit systems and water lines – and the deterioration of these aging systems— are costing all our families in Illinois and across the country \$9 a day, which is \$3,400 each year, in disposable income. I enthusiastically applaud this bill’s goal of encouraging research and use of innovative construction materials and techniques in our transportation and water infrastructure projects.”

“New materials and building techniques can help make our infrastructure second to none. Rhode Island companies are already helping to lead the way in this field, and I’m excited to give them even more tools to get ahead,” said Cicilline. “It’s critical that we move forward on this bill so we can better take on the challenge of rebuilding our bridges, roads, and public transit systems.”

“The IMAGINE Act will help to identify innovative technology and advanced materials to address the nation’s growing infrastructure needs,” said Larsen. “Washington state alone needs over \$190 billion in infrastructure investments and I am proud to join my colleagues on bipartisan legislation to explore ways to improve safety, promote resiliency and support jobs and local economies.”

“Stronger and more resilient building materials are needed to help our roads and bridges withstand the heavy use and harsh environments that they are subjected to, especially in my home state,” said Young. “This bill will help ensure that we are using the strongest and most effective techniques and materials as we rebuild our infrastructure.”

The IMAGINE Act takes several steps to incentivize the use of innovative infrastructure materials – the bill creates a task force to examine the approval process for infrastructure materials, it promotes research and development of new materials; and it enhances federal investment in infrastructure projects that utilize innovative materials.

In addition, the bill encourages the development of high-performance asphalt mixtures and concrete formulations, geo-synthetic materials, advanced insulating materials, advanced alloys and metals, reinforced polymer composites and advanced polymers, nanocellulose and wood-based composites, coatings, highly functional adhesives, and other corrosion prevention methods used in conjunction with those materials, and any other material or aggregate materials as determined by the relevant agencies.

One provision calls on the Transportation Secretary to form innovative material hubs throughout the country to continue to drive research into and development of innovative materials for use in infrastructure projects. The provision was inspired by the success of communities of materials manufacturers that have leveraged their innovations and expertise to grow their industry.