




PCI goes to Washington

In early March, PCI staff and members from Pennsylvania and New Jersey participated in visits to congressional offices in Washington, D.C., in what I am calling our first “mini fly-in” with staff and members of the National Precast Concrete Association (NPCA). For several years, PCI and NPCA had jointly funded a lobbying firm that also participated and helped set up the meetings. Along with legislative visits, members of the group also met with the White House Office of Public Liaison and officials with both the Department of Labor and the Department of Transportation. Thanks to PCI members from Northeast Precast, High Concrete Group, and PennStress along with PCI Mid-Atlantic’s executive director, Dawn Decker, for taking the time to join us.

One of the legislative priorities for PCI this year is the authorization of the federal surface transportation program, Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development for America’s 250th Act, known as the BUILD America 250 Act. This authorizes federal funding for highway, transit, and rail infrastructure in the United States. This funding is of obvious importance to PCI’s bridge and pile producers. The current law, the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), expires on September 30 of this year. The group met with members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, which oversees the bill, encouraging them to support reauthorization and robust funding for bridge construction.

Since our visit, the Committee in May voted 61 to 2 to advance the BUILD America 250 Act. The proposed legislation authorizes funding for federal-aid highways, bridge construction and rehabilitation, highway safety programs, transit programs, and rail programs. The bipartisan committee vote signals potential broad support, authorizing \$580 billion in transportation spending through fiscal year 2031, a \$30 billion increase over the \$550 billion authorized under the IIJA.

Among the BUILD America 250 Act’s most notable provisions is a new annual federal registration fee of \$130 for electric vehicles and \$35 for plug-in hybrids, with both amounts rising by \$5 every two years beginning in 2029. States would collect the fees and remit them to the Federal Highway Administration, supplementing declining gas tax revenue. The proposed bill also streamlines permitting for transportation projects by tightening agency approval deadlines.

Significant hurdles remain before the bill can become law. Congress faces a crowded legislative calendar in the months ahead before election day in November. I encourage all PCI members, especially our bridge producers, to contact their representatives in Congress and urge them to pass the legislation by the deadline. We will stay informed on the progress of the bill. We also look forward to arranging future fly-ins for PCI members on other important issues, such as workforce development. 



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