FAILURE TO ACT:
WHAT IT MEANS WHEN WE DON’T INVEST

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December 1, 2011
The Economic Impact of Current Investment Trends in Surface Transportation Infrastructure
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Category</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>Aviation</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Bridges</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Dams</td>
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<td>Drinking Water</td>
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<td>Energy</td>
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<td>Levees</td>
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<td>Public Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>Rail</td>
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<td>Roads</td>
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<td>Solid Waste</td>
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<td>Wastewater</td>
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FAILURE TO ACT

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF CURRENT INVESTMENT TRENDS IN
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE ★★★★☆
American businesses and workers PAY A HEAVY PRICE.

America would lose **877,000** jobs.

Another **234,000** jobs exist only if many more workers agree to paycuts.

Between now and 2020 transportation costs increase **$430B.**
AMERICA LOSES GROUND
in the global economy.

U.S. exports would drop by $28 billion.

+ Exports drop in 79 of 93 different tradable commodities.

= America’s gross domestic product underperforms by $897B.
Families have a lower standard of living.

American families would earn $700 less each year.

+ And spend $360 more each year.

= Total impact on each family’s budget: $1,060 per year.
What are people saying?
2011 Rockefeller Foundation Survey

71% of voters say there should be common ground on transportation

- 66% of voters say that improving the country’s transportation infrastructure is extremely (27%) or very (39%) important

But, voters do not support proposals that would affect their own wallets.

- 71% say it would be unacceptable to increase the federal gas tax;
- 51% are opposed to placing a new tax on foreign oil
- 58% are opposed to replacing the federal gas tax with a mileage fee
- 64% are opposed to adding new tolls to interstate highways and bridges
BAF Focus Groups

- Conducted among likely Republican voters in New Hampshire and South Carolina. Findings:
  - Voters are open to infrastructure spending coupled with reforms
  - Issue needs to be localized
  - Strongest argument based on infrastructure’s link to the economy
  - Emphasize accountability, planning, private sector, innovation
  - Job creation argument did not test as well
ASCE Focus Groups

- Conducted three sets of focus groups in LA, Des Moines, and Washington DC
- Targeted both Democrat and Republican “opinion elites”
- Identified level of priority for infrastructure among other issues, as well as messaging choices
- Goal is to test assumptions and gauge current public opinion
Focus Groups Validate Earlier Findings

- Infrastructure is the backbone of our economy, it’s how we move people, goods and energy
  - Some areas of this country are more aware of the problems associated with our infrastructure than others (urban vs. rural)

- Elites believe we need a long-term national plan and vision for improving America’s infrastructure
  - Must prioritize projects
  - Articulate special and localized projects
  - Must be coupled with performance and accountability measures
ASCE Focus Group Findings

• Best Argument
  – Jobs + Economic Development/Advancement + Impact and Importance to Daily Lives

• Focus on positive, forward thinking statements
  – Progress and modernization, not repair
  – Economic growth, not economic harm
  – May be outdated and deteriorating, but it’s not “crumbling”

• Steer clear of absolutes
  – Part of the solution, not the only solution
  – Basic element of a strong economy, not the basis of our economy
For More Information

www.asce.org/reportcard
www.asce.org/economicstudy

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