



House Transportation Committee Hears from Secretary Buttigieg on Infrastructure

Late last month, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing to discuss the Biden Administration's priorities for transportation infrastructure. In his opening remarks, Secretary Buttigieg said the Biden Administration wanted to "go big" on a national infrastructure program, indicating a goal of raising over \$2.5 trillion over the next ten years. The Secretary did not indicate exactly how this money would be raised, although new corporate taxes are the likely starting point.

Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) echoed the Secretary's remarks but added that an infrastructure bill should also deal with issues like climate change, social equity and "Buy America" requirements. Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO) said that the legislation must be bipartisan, financially responsible, and that spending be responsibly distributed equitably between rural and urban communities.

The hearing quietly highlighted the legislative differences between Democrat and Republican members of the Committee, particularly on climate change and social equity issues. Last year, Chairman DeFazio completely ignored the interests of the minority when writing his infrastructure package.

It is almost a foregone conclusion that the Committee will recommend an increase in the federal gas tax, but a significant amount of additional money will be needed to fund the bill. Members will consider a vehicle-miles traveled tax to account for the growing use of electric cars and trucks.

Additional hearings on infrastructure proposals will be held in April, with a formal bill likely to be introduced by the Chairman within a month.