

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
Department of Transportation
New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg,

We are writing to request that as your administration develops any infrastructure proposals, the administration prioritize the planning and construction of significant national projects like the proposed expansion of Interstate-11 (I-11) from the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona into Northern Nevada. This vital corridor is critical to the safety, environmental impact, and job creation potential of our transportation network in the Southwest.

In 2012, Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act, which approved the establishment of Interstate-11 between the Phoenix, AZ and Las Vegas, NV metropolitan areas.^[1] Subsequently, Congress approved an expansion of the I-11 from the US-Mexico Border to Northern Nevada in the reauthorization of the MAP-21 Act, known as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.^[2]

Congress, including the Arizona and Nevada delegations, have shown leadership in advocating the project because it will help expand economic development and growth in a key region of the United States with a rapidly expanding population. Our states are among the fastest-growing states in the nation,^[3] and while we strongly support repair of existing roads, bridges, transit, and other transportation infrastructure, building expanded access for efficient travel, like the I-11 corridor, is of great importance to the Southwest. Much of the effort to design and construct this interstate will also go toward improving the safety and efficiency of the existing corridor, which is highly traveled. With these regions the only major markets in the U.S not connected by an interstate, we believe this project should be strongly considered as the administration reviews its highway priorities.

According to economic projections, I-11 would bring an additional 240,000 jobs and \$22 billion in economic output to the region over the next 25 years. It would strengthen our states' manufacturing and logistics capabilities and establish new connectivity between the U.S. economy and rapidly growing economies in Latin America.^[4]

^[1][Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century](#). ADOT (2012)

^[2][Future I-11 route through Nevada designated in highway bill, in part to follow U.S. 95](#). Overdrive Online (2015)

^[3][Nevada 3rd-fastest growing state in 2020](#). Reno Gazette Journal (2020)

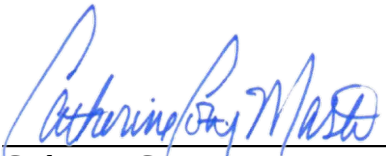
^[4][I-11 and Intermountain West Corridor Study](#). NDOT & ADOT. 2014

These new opportunities would help Nevada, Arizona, and surrounding states diversify their economies, reduce freight congestion, and create jobs for residents. Arizona and Nevada are also signatories to a bipartisan Memorandum of Understanding by Western states to expand zero-emissions vehicle infrastructure along the signatory states' major transportation corridors.^[5] This action shows a commitment to reducing climate impacts of new transportation investments while continuing to expand economic opportunity.

At this time, the key challenge for the development and completion of I-11 is funding certainty. Transportation reauthorization legislation that was under consideration in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate last Congress included language and resources related to nationally significant projects, and I-11 is most certainly that. With only roughly 23 miles of the interstate constructed and with many hundreds of miles to go, our states' transportation officials, business community, and residents are hopeful for a significant federal investment to ensure the enormous benefits of this important project are realized.

We appreciate your willingness to work with us on this and other important transportation and infrastructure projects that are of importance to Western states. We look forward to cooperating with the administration as you develop proposals to modernize our nation's infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator

CC:

Brian Deese, National Economic Council
Chairman Tom Carper, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Chairwoman Maria Cantwell, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

^[5][MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING Between Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming Regional Electric Vehicle Plan for the West. \(2017\)](#)