

**The BUILD GREEN Infrastructure and Jobs Act**  
*Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward J. Markey,*  
*Representatives Andy Levin and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on our economy. We need bold new policies that create good-paying jobs to strengthen our economy while protecting us from another looming catastrophe: the worldwide threat of climate change.

Climate experts overwhelmingly agree that electrification is one of the best options to adequately address climate change contributions from our transportation sector<sup>1</sup> – a sector that accounts for about 29% of U.S. emissions, the largest source of emissions by sector.<sup>2</sup> Far more efficient than combustion engines, electric engines would reduce the amount of energy needed for transportation by about two-thirds.<sup>3</sup>

The ***Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development and Generating Renewable Energy to Electrify the Nation's (BUILD GREEN) Infrastructure and Jobs Act*** provides the first step to jumpstart transportation electrification. Modeled after the Department of Transportation's (DOT) successful BUILD grant program, ***The BUILD GREEN Act*** provides \$500 billion in grant funding over ten years for electrifying public transit systems including buses, school buses, railcars, and fleet vehicles, and for modernizing our nation's crumbling roads, bridges, and rail.

- Eligible entities for *BUILD GREEN* grants include a state, a unit of local government, a transit agency, a port authority, an Indian tribe, or a combination of the aforementioned entities.
- \$150 billion at minimum is allocated for electric passenger rail, electric vehicles, and electric vehicle charging equipment in order to meet the estimated funding needed to transition to all electric public transit. Other eligible projects include highways and bridges that install electric vehicle supply equipment and public transportation systems that are powered by electricity, like bus systems and rail.
- The DOT will select eligible projects that maximize sustainability and cost savings, including,
  - the extent to which an eligible project contributes to climate resilience and mitigation, and reduces air pollution, air toxics, and greenhouse gas emissions;
  - the extent to which the eligible project achieves energy savings and reduces energy usage compared to other eligible projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists, "The Future of Transportation Is Electric," David Reichmuth, April 24, 2019, <https://blog.ucsusa.org/dave-reichmuth/the-future-of-transportation-is-electric>.

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions," Accessed December 16, 2019, <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Energy, "All-Electric Vehicles," Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, Accessed December 16, 2019, <https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/evtech.shtml>.

- The DOT will prioritize and devote at least 40% of program funding to projects that serve a frontline or vulnerable community, are located in an area that has experienced high adverse health and environmental impacts from pollution, and/or that improve access to or add a new green space to the community.
- Any eligible project that uses electrical energy must add renewable energy generation to cover the energy consumed by that project.
- All projects must follow existing DOT Buy American provisions.
- Each state is guaranteed to receive at least \$2 billion for eligible programs and no state can receive more than \$40 billion. Grants will be distributed on an equitable geographical basis and prioritize low per capita income areas.
- DOT will fund up to 85% of project costs, a 5% increase from traditional BUILD grant cost-sharing to incentivize green building over traditional projects. The Transportation Secretary will have the option to waive the requirement entirely and fully fund select projects.
- All contracts associated with BUILD GREEN projects must include strong labor provisions for all workers, including
  - compliance with the prevailing wage requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act and pay for all workers that is the greater of the prevailing wage rate or a minimum of \$15 an hour (adjusted annually);
  - no less than 12 workweeks of paid leave and fair scheduling policies; and
  - a preference for local hiring, consistent with applicable federal law and subject to rules issued by the Secretary of Labor.

Data for Progress has estimated that these investments to electrify our transportation would [create an estimated 1 million new jobs with strong labor protections](#), save an estimated \$100 billion per year in avoided health damages, and reduce enough ambient air pollution to prevent 4,200 deaths per year.

The *BUILD GREEN Infrastructure and Jobs Act* is endorsed by Sunrise Movement, League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, 350.org, Greenpeace, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, Center for Progressive Reform, GreenLatinos, Rewiring America, New Consensus, Zero Hour ([thisiszerohour.org](http://thisiszerohour.org)), Data for Progress, WE ACT for Environmental Justice.