

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on “LIFT America: Revitalizing our Nation’s Infrastructure and Economy”

March 22, 2021

Today, we begin the process of rebuilding and revitalizing our economy by modernizing our nation’s infrastructure. Over the last year, we’ve seen the devastating results of inaction: major power outages, water disruptions, health care facilities stretched to the limit, and communities left behind due to the digital divide.

The LIFT America Act, which was introduced last week by all 32 Committee Democrats, will help build back a better economy. It invests a total of \$312 billion in clean and efficient energy, safe drinking water, expanded access to broadband, Brownfield cleanups, and improving our nation’s health care infrastructure.

This legislation will serve as the blueprint moving forward, and it provides us an opportunity to work together in bipartisan fashion to deliver a robust and comprehensive infrastructure package. I’m hopeful that we can work together to find bipartisan solutions – after all, there are a lot of bipartisan provisions included in this overall bill.

The LIFT America Act will help us combat the climate crisis by investing more than \$69 billion in clean energy and energy efficiency. We include funding to modernize our electric grid to accommodate more renewable energy and make it more resilient, funding to help rapidly deploy new technologies aimed at reducing emissions, and funding for energy efficiency.

We also invest more than \$41 billion in the deployment of electric vehicle infrastructure, including \$12.5 billion to accelerate domestic manufacturing of batteries, power electronics, and other technologies for use in plug-in vehicles.

Collectively, these investments will help us take an important step in combating the climate crisis, while also rebuilding our economy, creating good-paying jobs and providing much needed relief to consumers on their energy bills.

We also invest more than \$51 billion to protect Americans’ drinking water. The legislation extends and increases funding for the State Revolving Loan Fund and other safe water programs targeting lead service lines, water system resiliency, and water system security. We also establish a new \$2.5 billion grant program to help filter toxic PFAS chemicals, or forever chemicals, out of water supplies in effected communities and ensure that water systems in U.S. Territories will have access to the resources they need.

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We also further fund the Brownfields program, which has successfully helped communities, including many environmental justice communities, clean up contaminated sites, remove public health threats, and prepare the sites for development.

The LIFT America Act also makes significant investments in the expansion of broadband internet access. We invest \$80 billion for the deployment of secure and resilient high-speed broadband that will expand access nationwide. This major investment will allow for 100 percent broadband deployment across the country, closing the digital divide. Over the last year we've seen how essential internet connectivity is, and this investment will lead to stronger small businesses, more jobs and revitalized economies in communities that have simply been left behind for far too long.

The legislation also invests \$15 billion for the implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 services that allow callers to send text messages, images, or videos to 9-1-1 in times of emergency.

We also include \$9.3 billion for broadband affordability and adoption to ensure that everyone can afford internet services and have the knowledge and tools to use the internet to meet their needs.

Finally, the LIFT America Act invests \$30 billion in our nation's health infrastructure. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed an alarming number of pre-existing weaknesses in our nation's health care infrastructure. The pandemic has also stretched our health infrastructure to the breaking point. This funding will be used to upgrade hospitals and community health centers, improve clinical laboratory infrastructure, support the Indian Health Service, and increase the overall capacity for community-based care in America.

There is no better way to stimulate our economy for the future than to modernize our badly aging infrastructure. I encourage my Republican colleagues to join us in this pursuit to revitalize our economy, create millions of new jobs, combat climate change, and ensure no community is left behind. Let's get to work.