

December 7, 2011

Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Rahall:

On behalf of the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) – a labor-management partnership forged between some of America’s leading manufacturing companies and the United Steelworkers – I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 3533, the *Invest in American Jobs Act of 2011*.

Our Buy America laws have been weakened over time by loopholes and other exemptions that result in more of our tax dollars being sent to purchase steel and manufactured goods made overseas. There are also numerous gaps in our infrastructure spending programs where a Buy America preference does not currently exist. Even with a strong Buy America preference in place, there is little or no transparency to ensure Buy America preferences are enforced by Federal agencies. As a result, the American public has been shocked to learn that their tax dollars are increasingly being used to source steel and manufactured goods from factories in China and other foreign countries. **To improve the job-creating potential of infrastructure investment, Congress should quickly take up and pass the *Invest in American Jobs Act of 2011 (H.R. 3533)*.**

- **Strengthen Coverage.** The bill strengthens Buy America preferences that exist for a range of transportation programs, including highways and bridges, public transit, high-speed and intercity passenger rail, and aviation.
- **Expand Coverage.** The bill applies Buy America to transportation and infrastructure investments that currently are not normally covered, such as railroad loans and loan guarantees, water infrastructure grants, EDA grants, and FEMA mitigation grants.
- **More Transparency.** The bill requires Federal agencies to be transparent and through annual reporting provide the public with an accurate accounting of the instances when Buy America is waived, the amount of federal dollars sent overseas, and where that procurement occurs. The bill also would require Federal agencies to post requests for waivers of Buy America preferences on the official Internet website of the agency so the public can see and give comments. Before granting a waiver, the relevant agency must publish a reasoned justification for the waiver in the Federal Register and respond to any public comments. All of this transparency will bring much-needed accountability to the waiver process and finally let American companies and workers have a say before a waiver takes effect.

Buy America provisions are the best way to ensure that American businesses and workers benefit when tax dollars are spent. According to research conducted for AAM, maximizing the use of

domestic content with a Buy America preference yields a 33 percent increase in manufacturing job creation. In addition, polling conducted for AAM earlier this year shows that 91 percent of voters support Buy America policies to ensure that taxpayer-funded projects use only American-made goods and materials. Taking a closer look, support for Buy America was spread evenly across ideological, geographic and political backgrounds – from 94 percent among Democrats to 89 percent among Tea Party supporters.

As Congress moves to reauthorize our surface transportation laws, every effort should be made to ensure that **all** of the iron, steel and manufactured goods used to build and repair our nation's roads, bridges, highways, railways, and other infrastructure are produced in the United States. Again, thank you for introducing H.R. 3533 and we look forward to working with you to help it become law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott N. Paul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "Paul" clearly distinguishable.

Scott N. Paul
Executive Director

Cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives