



December 16, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
Presidential Transition Office  
Washington DC

Dear Mr. President-Elect:

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the business association of the nation’s engineering industry – I want to offer you our most sincere congratulations on your selection by the American people to be the nation’s 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. America’s engineering industry is eager to partner with you to “Build-Back-Better”, and to put the industry’s capacity for innovation at your disposal to enhance our nation’s infrastructure and grow the economy, address climate change, and design communities to promote a more inclusive and diverse society.

ACEC represents nearly 6,000 of the nation’s leading engineering firms, ranging from small, specialized firms to companies employing tens of thousands of professionals working here and around the globe. ACEC member firms drive the design of America’s infrastructure and the built environment and are a leading exporter of professional engineering services throughout the world.

We are particularly supportive of your vision for a robust infrastructure-based recovery agenda in 2021. A package that increases long-term investments in surface transportation, aviation, drinking water and wastewater improvements, buildings, energy, rural broadband and other critical needs will help to jumpstart the nation’s recovery and provide the basis for long-term economic growth.

The attached further summarizes these and other priorities that should align effectively with your agenda going forward, and we are eager to work with your Administration to make that agenda a reality. Once again, congratulations, and we look forward to new opportunities and better days in 2021!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Bauer Darr".

Linda Bauer Darr  
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Gozdziwski".

Charles J. Gozdziwski  
Chairman

Enclosure



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

## Key Policy Priorities for the New Administration in 2021

As the business voice of America’s engineers, ACEC looks forward to working with the Biden Administration to invest in long-term, fully funded resilient infrastructure, and showcase how our members – the designers of the built environment – can tackle the new normal of the COVID impacted workplace.

### COVID-19:

- Additional economic stimulus funding.
- Immediate additional financial assistance to state and local governments struggling with pandemic response actions, in particular funding backstops for departments of transportation, transit agencies, airports, water utilities, and other government sectors whose budgets are severely constrained.
- Increased investment in broadband deployment.
- ACEC supports a change to current IRS guidance that business costs covered by PPP loans are not tax deductible. This erroneous decision undermines the benefit of the program and is clearly inconsistent with congressional intent that PPP proceeds are not taxable income.
- ACEC seeks clarification that forgiven PPP loans are not subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation “credits” clause for government contractors, which makes the loans essentially unforgivable and undermines an essential component of economic relief for the industry.

### Economic Recovery

- **An Infrastructure Based Recovery Agenda:** ACEC supports an economic recovery agenda in the first 100 days built around significant and sustained investment in the nation’s public and private infrastructure. A massive federal investment will enable the engineering industry to upgrade our systems to address years of deferred maintenance and rehabilitation, while modernizing our networks to accommodate expected growth in population and freight movement, incorporate new technologies, improve safety, strengthen resilience, and reduce emissions.

This agenda should include:

- Multi-year reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs with substantially increased funding to support road, bridge, transit, and rail projects;
  - Investment in critical water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as projects to enhance ports and waterways and protect against flooding and other natural disasters;
  - Policies that bolster investments in clean and affordable energy and make our system more resilient and sustainable; and
  - Hazardous waste clean-up and remediation.
- **US Development Finance Corporation:** As a still-new agency, with significant funding, a long view of current + future role of the DFC is necessary. With the developing world struggling to regain its footing

post-Covid, the US will likely play a leading role in restoring partnerships abroad, deploying American engineering to introduce the innovations developed here is essential.

- **Trade Agreements** – Engineering services hold a critical place in the U.S. economy and directly underpin a \$1 trillion annual construction market in the United States. It is important to remember that any changes to professional service standards in general, and engineering services specifically, need to emphasize equal treatment for all competitors, while maintaining the public-safety based licensing requirements of each country. This requires consistent laws and regulations within each country that are transparent, consistent for all participants from nations bound by the agreement, and consistently enforced.

### **Racial Equity:**

- **Rescind Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping.** Employers today are having to suspend necessary training programs to increase diversity and inclusion in their firms. The EO has created a chilling effect on legitimate and valuable D&I training that companies use to foster inclusive workplaces, help with talent recruitment, and remain competitive in a country with a wide range of different cultures. It will also create confusion and uncertainty, lead to non-meritorious investigations, and hinder the ability of employers to implement critical programs to promote diversity and combat discrimination in the workplace.

### **Immigration**

- **Rescind the presidential proclamation of June 22, 2020** - suspended H-1B and L visas (note: this order is in force until December 31, 2020 but can be extended).

### **Climate Change**

- Develop the necessary standards, research, technical support, and inter-agency processes to cost effectively support future risk mitigation by agencies and public and private utilities.
- Provide financial and other resources to equip state and local agencies and public and private utilities with the tools to routinely and holistically assess trends and manage a wide range of natural and man-made risks (e.g., flood, drought, wind, wildfire, heat, earthquake, and cyber).
- Implement the Executive Order issued October 13, 2020 on Modernizing America's Water Resource Management and Infrastructure.
- Maintain energy reliability and affordability while advancing decarbonization through DOE and FERC policies; open energy markets to greater competition with technologies including efficiency, renewables, energy storage, transmission, electrification, advanced nuclear, hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage.