

Act from A1

finally, there is a majority of us in Congress who won't accept the status quo and instead are willing to fight for a new vision that invests in our communities, addresses the climate crisis, and creates better opportunities for all," DeFazio said after passage of the act. "We get there by putting millions of people to work in jobs that cannot be exported, while harnessing American-made materials, ingenuity and innovation. "With the Moving Forward Act, we make it clear that our infrastructure does not have to be a product of the past, with crumbling roads and bridges, unreliable transit and rail networks, inequitable outcomes and little regard to our changing climate and our changing economy." DeFazio facilitated

the debate surrounding many of the 170 amendments to the act and engaged influential committee Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee Frank Pallone and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal as point persons in the floor battle.

Some of the main elements of the act are in addition to traditional infrastructure improvements, as well as extending the concept of traditional improvements to provide ways for those directly impacted by the pandemic to join in the digital revolution in order to prepare job seekers for the future.

If passed, major components of the Moving Forward Act include:

- National strategies to modernize infrastructure in order to reduce gridlock, address bottlenecks and make roads smarter and safer for all

users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Keep cargo moving by funding the essential dredging and upkeep of American harbors, ports and channels.

- Invest more than \$100 billion in mass transit to put more zero-emission buses on the road, add new routes and provide more service, resulting in better transit options and fewer single-occupant cars clogging highways.

- Invest in programs, projects and materials that emphasize resiliency while reducing carbon pollution from the transportation sector, including \$1.4 billion in alternative fuel charging infrastructure.

- Modernize energy sector infrastructure with the goal of moving towards a clean energy future by investing more than \$70 billion to accommodate and expand renewable energy.

- Authorize \$25 billion to modernize the U.S. Postal Service's infrastructure and operations, including a fleet of electric vehicles.

- Target road and bridge improvements with more than \$300 billion to prioritize fixing tens of thousands of structurally deficient bridges.

Many parts of H.R.2 will have a direct impact on the quality of life experienced by Oregonians, if a unified bill emerges from Senate and House conference committees.

Rural coastal communities in Lane County would benefit from increased funding provided for ports and coastal communities.

Part of the act includes a \$3 billion grant program for shovel-ready projects to restore coastal habitats and marine ecosystems along with funding for dredging

and bar repair.

There could also be some measure of relief offered with one of the state's most vexing issues: Affordable housing.

Housing has been targeted in H.R.2 with an expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and with new incentives for affordable housing development in rural and tribal communities.

The financial shortfalls now projected for many agencies in the states could be minimized by the act's permanent reinstatement of the Build America Bond program and by the introduction of new, more flexible loans for COVID impacted businesses.

The financial benefits to the State of Oregon currently codified in H.R.2, primarily in support of road, transit and other infrastructure upgrades, would surpass \$4.5 billion.

This amount will more than likely shift once a Senate bill is crafted, passed and goes to a

joint committee for final changes.

On the House floor, DeFazio said that he was hopeful the Senate would work quickly to support the Moving Forward Act, putting partisan politics aside for the betterment of all Americans.

"I challenge my Senate colleagues to join the House in thinking big and being bold on long-overdue investments not only in our infrastructure, but also in the communities and the people we all represent," he said.

On July 1, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi stated, "We urge Leader (Mitch) McConnell and the Senate to join the House in supporting this transformative legislation 'For The People.' As Americans across the country come together to peacefully demand justice, equality and progress, the Congress must meet this moment by moving our country forward with real action."

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# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

**Learn the facts about devastating wildfires**

Deadly wildfires ravaged thousands upon thousands of acres of land across California in the summer of 2018. Officials at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said these combined fires comprised the largest wildlands fire in state history. Frightening images of blazes consuming landscapes dominated newscasts as thousands of people were forced to evacuate.

Wildfires torch everything in their paths, devastating communities, businesses and natural resources. Outbreaks seems to come out of nowhere, and meteorologists are not yet able to forecast when wildfires may occur.

It is important to note that wildfires are often started by humans. The National Park Service says as many as 90 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by negligence — whether it's discarded cigarette butts or campfires left unattended. Some are intentional acts of arson. Nature also may be responsible, with lightning strikes causing torching of parched plants and trees. When combined with the perfect conditions, which can include dry weather, drought and strong winds, a mere spark can develop into a months-long blaze.

The NPS has wildland fire managers who constantly assess the threat of human-caused fires and the threat of wildland fires to humans. Assessments are made as to whether the wildfire should be left to run its course (in rural areas) or it should be contained and extinguished in a human-dominated landscape. National Geographic states that, historically, wildfires are actually supposed to be beneficial to certain natural landscapes, clearing underbrush in forests and triggering the release of seeds in some plant species, such as the Jack pine. However, when they encroach on people, their danger intensifies.

According to Cal Fire, Santa Ana Winds and Diablo Winds are stronger-than-normal wind conditions that occur in Southern and Northern California, respectively. These winds can push a fire the length of a football field in a minute. Embers also pushed in front of fires become small spot fires. Powerful winds can disrupt efforts to extinguish fires, dissipating fire retardants dropped by aircraft.

Wildfires can wreak havoc on the environment and impact personal health. Worldwide, wildfire smoke kills 339,000 people per year according to estimates from Environmental Health Perspectives. Inhaling smoke can exacerbate asthma, and carbon monoxide can damage the respiratory system.

Considering how difficult it can be to contain fires, prevention remains key. Remember Smokey Bear's tips, which remain relevant for kids and adults today:

- Never play with matches or lighters in the forest.
- Always watch your campfire.
- Always be careful with fire.
- Make sure a campfire is completely extinguished before leaving it.
- Observe posted fire-risk warnings.

Wildfires remain a constant threat wherever the conditions are right for fires to ignite. People need to be diligent in their prevention of these potentially far-reaching hazards.



*Wildfires can wipe out communities and travel miles in mere minutes under the right conditions.*

# PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.  
**South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506**



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