

The Northeast-Midwest Institute's 2024 Report on the Economic Impacts of the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act of 2021

Northeast-Midwest Institute

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May 6, 2024



The Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law on November 15, 2021, by President Joe Biden, is one of the biggest infrastructure investments in United States history. It comprises over \$1.2 trillion being dispersed to all fifty states and each territory to improve, upgrade, or remodel infrastructure and technology on levels not seen in generations. This report is compiled of five types of reports: those analyzing the scope and types of infrastructure included in the law; those that assess the progress and pace of the IIJA implementation; those that evaluate the impact on infrastructure in specific sectors; those that evaluate the economic impact of the IIJA to date; and those that provide future recommendations. There are reports from think tanks, policy centers, and government bureaus and centers. Each is important in order to understand the entire scope of this enormous legislation.

I. Reports analyzing the scope and types of infrastructure included in the IIJA bill as passed.

The *White House* has a [report](#) that is updated monthly that details every sector, state, and every individual project that is funded by the IIJA. There are thousands of projects listed, and also posted are success stories about how the funds are affecting individuals and small businesses. It is very user-friendly and openly states, using interactive infographics, where all the funds have been allocated. So far, Texas has received the most funding of all the fifty states, with California coming in second.¹ The information that the *National Governors Association* [gives](#) is specifically tailored to governors once they receive the funding. It gives very good advice about what to spend the money on to best improve their communities for the longest amount of time possible.²

II. Reports that assess the progress and pace in implementing the IIJA.

Meanwhile, there are also several reports that assess the progress and pace in implementing the IIJA itself. *Statista* gives similar [data](#) to that of the White House, only is not updated as frequently, and specifically states government budget deficits as well as state funding for easy tracking.³

The *Engineering News-Record* goes [more](#) in-depth with their research towards infrastructure and climate-related details, stating that “the release of the White House document comes not only near its two-year milestone, but at a time when House Republicans have been producing appropriations bills that

¹ The White House. “Maps of Progress | Build.gov,” n.d. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/build/maps-of-progress/>.

² National Governors Association. “IIJA Implementation Resources,” April 15, 2024. <https://www.nga.org/ijja-implementation-resources/>.

³ Statista. “New Infrastructure Jobs Created by Occupation U.S. 2021.” Accessed April 15, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1401475/new-infrastructure-jobs-created-occupation-us/>.

would slash funding for many infrastructure accounts for fiscal year 2024.” The Biden administration intended for the law to enable more private sector investment as well and has succeeded in doing so with more than \$614 billion now going towards manufacturing facilities and clean energy in that regard. They also found that “the impact of the IIJA is expected to grow. For one thing, it extends for three more years, with funding authorities for at least some categories continuing well beyond the law’s fifth year. Construction projects, especially large ones, routinely span multiple years. So, the economic effects of a project selected for a grant in the fifth year of the law will extend well beyond that point.” Some of the sectors receiving funding from this law that have tangible statistics are highways and bridges, resilience, rail, superfund/brownfields, airports, energy, ports and waterways, broadband, transit, water infrastructure, and electric vehicle infrastructure. Not only that, but the IIJA has legislative staying power because it is bipartisan and therefore much harder to get overturned or undone.⁴

III. Reports that evaluate the impact on infrastructure in different categories.

There are other organizations that have evaluated the IIJA’s impact on infrastructure in specific categories, some of which include highways, bridges, harbors, railroads, waterways, and airports. The *American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA)* is [one](#) of those, stating that “while public investments in transportation infrastructure create jobs and generate tax revenue throughout the economy during the construction cycle, infrastructure improvements also foster economic growth and efficiency over many years beyond the initial investment by creating long-lived tangible capital assets.” Public investments in transportation infrastructure, while bolstering both job growth and tax revenue across the United States during the construction cycle, also aid economic growth and productivity beyond the scope of the initial law. Not only that, but “the Federal Highway Administration estimates that every \$1 billion in highway and bridge infrastructure investment supports at least 13,000 jobs throughout the U.S. economy.”⁵ The IIJA has helped fund thousands of new jobs in the construction and highway sectors and will continue to do so in the upcoming years.

The *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)* has been [positively](#) impacted by the IIJA funding in three main initiatives: climate data and services (\$904 million), climate-ready

⁴ Ichniowski, Tom. “White House Issues Progress Report on Infrastructure Act Rollout | Engineering News-Record.” www.enr.com, November 9, 2023. <https://www.enr.com/articles/57551-white-house-issues-progress-report-on-infrastructure-act-rollout>.

⁵ <https://www.artba.org/>. “Highway Dashboard – IIJA - ARTBA,” 2024. <https://www.artba.org/market-intelligence/highway-dashboard-iija/>.

coasts (\$1.467 billion), and fisheries and protected resources (\$592 million).⁶ It then goes through specific projects that have been funded with the IIJA grants.

The *Department of Transportation's Volpe Center* [highlights](#) the creation of the Department of Transportation's Project Delivery Center of Excellence, stating that it was created to “support and educate recipients of federal funds - transportation infrastructure managers in state, Tribal, local, regional, and territorial governments - in delivering transportation infrastructure projects more efficiently and effectively from concept to completion.” With the Project Delivery Center comes the Project Delivery Toolbox, which “serves as a central repository for project delivery information and best practices across U.S. DOT.” These creations have positively impacted the U.S. Department of Transportation's public engagement, environment, equity, project management, financing, pre-construction, risk management, and construction sectors.⁷

Along with that, the Volpe Center also described the Key Takeaways from the internal research conducted, which are that “this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild our nation's infrastructure,” and “community and stakeholder engagement are key to successful project delivery.” Open communication and collaboration with communities are necessities to foster impactful projects, and because this is the largest investment in roads and bridges since the creation of the interstate system, passenger rail since Amtrak, and the largest impact on electric vehicle infrastructure ever, impact is a top priority. Community engagement also leads to better planning, risk mitigation, and better decision-making, thus increasing the quality and sustainability of projects as well. Fairer and more accessible options will become available to everyone, no matter their background, and this will streamline connectivity to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.⁸ Similarly, the *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration* [found](#) that the IIJA funds helped them with vehicle and road safety in eighteen different sectors, countermeasures, data and states, and in appropriations.⁹

Another organization that conducted similar research was *Itron*, who [found](#) five key opportunities for the use of the IIJA funds. They were the Grid Resilience and Innovations Program (GRIP),

⁶ www.noaa.gov. “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law,” September 28, 2023. <https://www.noaa.gov/infrastructure-law>.

⁷ “Delivering the Benefits of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law a Thought Leadership Series | Final Report Delivering the Benefits of the BIL Thought Leadership Series I,” 2024. <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/sites/volpe.dot.gov/files/2024-01/Delivering%20the%20Benefits%20of%20the%20BIL%20Thought%20Leadership%20Series%20Final%20Report.pdf>

⁸ “Delivering the Benefits of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law a Thought Leadership Series | Final Report Delivering the Benefits of the BIL Thought Leadership Series I,” 2024. <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/sites/volpe.dot.gov/files/2024-01/Delivering%20the%20Benefits%20of%20the%20BIL%20Thought%20Leadership%20Series%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

⁹ www.nhtsa.gov. “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law | NHTSA,” n.d. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law>.

WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants, Climate Pollution Reduction Program (GRPG), Safe Streets and Roads for All, and Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART). These programs will focus mostly on SLV, street lighting, fleet planning, EV charging, increased grid flexibility and resilience, and End to End water, amongst other initiatives.¹⁰ These programs would greatly increase traffic flow and would impact millions of people positively. Along with those points, *McKinsey and Company* [found](#) in their research that the IJA targets the energy sector very well, and has granted more money towards grid modernization, new technology, resiliency, and carbon capture than ever before.¹¹

The *Center for American Progress* also [evaluated](#) the effects of the IJA funding, specifically with climate change. They found that climate change action can be possible with the funding received, with the stipulation that they are applied for and distributed quickly and efficiently with the goal of maximizing GHG emissions. That, along with the Biden administration's tax credits and coordinated interagency support, will make these funds worthwhile. The Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (JOET) is also facilitating EV charging networks, and Mitch Landrieu, who was appointed as Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator of the IJA, is urging states to appoint infrastructure coordinators and infrastructure task forces. If these can be created quickly, then climate change can be harnessed. "If funds are spent on highway expansion and new roadway construction, resulting in increased traffic pollution," then GHG emissions could increase instead of decrease with the IJA funding. This would set back years of work on decarbonization goals and would prevent the Justice40 Initiative from taking off. Disadvantaged communities such as those of color or low-income would not get the overall benefits provided from this program, and change would not be seen.¹²

The *Urban Institute* conducted [research](#) on U.S. public transportation ridership and found that it is very low. Only two-and-a-half percent of U.S. workers commute by public transit because only eight percent of U.S. housing units are located near high-quality rail and bus stations. In a study that compared U.S. public transit to those of Canada, England and Wales, and France, it was found that "urban transit is accessible to fewer households in the United States than in comparable countries." However, in New York, The Bay Area, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, Boston, and Washington D.C., at least twenty

¹⁰ Pfeiffer, Dan. "Maximizing the IJA: Current Grant Opportunities Aligned with Itron Solutions." EMEA, January 4, 2024. <https://emea.itron.com/w/maximizing-the-ija>.

¹¹ Barth, Adam, Bernice Chan, and Ksenia Kaladiouk. "The US Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Funding Clean Energy | McKinsey." *www.mckinsey.com*, March 20, 2023. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/one-year-into-the-bil-catalyzing-us-investments-in-energy>.

¹² Alexander, Meredith, Hannah Argento-McCurdy, Aimee Barnes, Chris Chyung, Camile Cleveland, and Diana Madson. "How States Can Use the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Enhance Their Climate Action Efforts." Center for American Progress, March 23, 2022. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-states-can-use-the-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-to-enhance-their-climate-action-efforts/>.

percent of housing is near stations. The cities that are struggling with less than five percent of housing units within a kilometer of stations are Tampa, Detroit, and Houston. Minneapolis and Seattle have major upcoming public transportation projects to try to increase these numbers. Convenient transportation is very important for millions of Americans, especially to low-income communities and POC, and easy access is dire for making a better impact for them.¹³

The *Center for Western Studies* [focused](#) their research on natural habitats, and found that in April 2022, \$35 million went to the National Fish Passage Program for thirty-nine projects in twenty-two states. Later in October 2023, an additional \$36 million went to that same program. This funding was needed to build fish tunnels to help anadromous fish become able to get back to spawning areas in Wyoming, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, and Arizona. They also stated that “fish, wildlife, and communities across the West will all benefit from these investments in habitat connectivity, ecosystem health, and road safety.” The positive impacts of this funding are being seen, and these fish are finally getting help to keep their species alive.¹⁴

A different side to the IJA is the funding it attributed to national security. The *Council on Foreign Relations* [found](#) that “less celebrated is the investment this legislation provides for U.S. national security, and in particular resilience against cyber threats to critical infrastructure: ports, energy grids and transition lines, railways, and the many other means by which the United States transports goods, data, energy, and people.” In March 2024, the Biden administration announced a \$20 billion fund towards cyber resilience, which will greatly impact the intelligence field.¹⁵

IV. Reports that evaluate the economic impact of the IJA to date.

The *Bipartisan Policy Center* [developed](#) “Five Ways the IJA Makes the Economy Stronger Through Clean Energy,” which is a set of provisions and analyses of infrastructure and clean energy through the law. It includes investments in energy infrastructure totaling the addition of over \$104 billion to the GDP - a 2x return on investment, and the creation of over 43,000 jobs and an over \$32 billion increase to GDP in carbon capture and removal. There were also 27,000 jobs created for transmission and

¹³ Freemark, Yonah. “Federal Infrastructure Funds Could Fill Gaps in Local Transit Accessibility | Urban Institute.” [www.urban.org](https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/federal-infrastructure-funds-could-fill-gaps-local-transit-accessibility), January 13, 2023. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/federal-infrastructure-funds-could-fill-gaps-local-transit-accessibility>.

¹⁴ Hamby, Rachael. “Recent Wins for Fish Passage in Western States.” Center for Western Priorities, October 23, 2023. <https://westernpriorities.org/2023/10/recent-wins-for-fish-passage-in-western-states/>.

¹⁵ Crebo-Rediker, Heidi. “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Unsung Hero Protecting Critical Infrastructure from National Security Threats.” Council on Foreign Relations, March 4, 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act-unsung-hero-protecting-critical-infrastructure-national>.

grid provisions that led to a \$3 billion increase to the GDP, 10,000 jobs and an increase of \$1.3 billion to the GDP for the remediation of orphan wells, and finally, 13,000 jobs created for the increase of energy efficiency.¹⁶ The IJA has greatly increased job opportunities for various careers, and those impacts will continue to grow as the law continues to fund additional projects.

The *Brookings Institute* [published](#) a report on the economic impact of the IJA after its two-year anniversary in November 2023, including an updated award datasheet. Important updates were in it, including data transparency from the Biden administration, a finding of no political bias in the awards to the states, and both direct federal spending and formula spending that are continuing at a steady pace. An important point to note from the article was that “with over half of the IJA’s 5,532 competitive awards coming in under \$1 million - and another twenty-nine percent of awards falling between \$1 million and \$10 million - eligible entities of all sizes can find programs that fit their needs and capacities. Yet with inflation and interest rates high, infrastructure builders need to be careful that they prioritize projects that can deliver the most value in the long run.” The Brookings Institute also expects that as more money gets spent, there will also be an increased demand for skilled labor, stating that in “October 2023 unemployment in the construction and utilities sectors was still extremely low by historical standards, with growing project demands only serving to increase worker bargaining power.” However, with increasing workers compensation and rising material costs, the number of total projects put out will be reduced.¹⁷

With the IJA’s many funds came regulations that are negatively impacting the chemists of the United States. The *American Chemistry Council*, in their [research](#), had a few grievances with how the IJA funds are being spent, with the President and CEO of the ACC stating that “U.S. chemical manufacturers continue to face challenges from persistent inflation, competition overseas, and a dramatic increase in regulations at home. Unless policymakers take a different approach to how they develop and apply regulations, critical chemistries will suffer along with the important products supported by chemistry.” The new chemical regulatory policies being enforced are affecting the ability to obtain permits due to government delays, and new regulatory burdens are affecting all chemical sectors. Of the fifty-eight companies who participated in the September 2023 survey, thirty-eight percent were “small businesses,” having only 550 full-time employees or less.¹⁸

¹⁶ bipartisanpolicy.org. “Investing in a Decarbonized America: Energy and Climate Provisions in the IJA | Bipartisan Policy Center,” n.d. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/iija-decarbonize-america/>.

¹⁷ Tomer, Adie. “At Its Two-Year Anniversary, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Continues to Rebuild All of America.” Brookings, November 17, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/at-its-two-year-anniversary-the-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-continues-to-rebuild-all-of-america/>.

¹⁸ American Chemistry Council. “Impact of Rising Regulations on Chemical Manufacturing & American Priorities.” Accessed April 15, 2024. <https://www.americanchemistry.com/chemistry-in-america/chemistry-creates-america-competes/impact-of-rising-regulations-on-chemical-manufacturing-american-priorities>.

V. Reports that provide future recommendations regarding the IIJA.

The *U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe Center* suggested in their [research](#) that successful projects started “slowly with an extended upfront period of planning, simulation, and experimentation” and “learned from other projects and avoided the dangers of uniqueness bias and working in isolation.” Pete Buttigieg, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, stated that now is “the best chance probably in our lifetimes in the United States to transform our transportation systems for the better, to make communities safer, to make transportation cleaner, to advance equity, and to connect people to the resources , opportunities, and jobs that are going to shape their lives.”¹⁹

The *Urban Institute* [found](#) that the IIJA funds could help more people access public transit, and to do so, “when selecting projects for funding from the IIJA, U.S. Department of Transportation officials could consider how much investments may increase transit access to a higher share of the population, especially if those projects can improve accessibility to employment and other needs for people of color and residents with low incomes,” and most importantly, “if linked with local land-use policies that encourage dense development near stations, transit projects could be particularly useful.”²⁰

The *Georgetown Climate Center* also [found](#) the IIJA could lead to important advancements in climate change, or it could cause more greenhouse gas than the United States already has. “Where the actual outcome falls within the range will depend on the decisions made by state, federal, and local governments about how to spend the money made available by IIJA.” To make it worthwhile, a “fix it first” approach needs to be used instead of building or expanding roads. They found that “the transportation sector is responsible for roughly a third of the country’s carbon dioxide pollution, with roughly eighty percent of that tally coming from cars and trucks on the nation’s highways.” There are two major investment scenarios that can occur: a high-emission and a low-emission scenario.²¹ It is up to politicians from every municipality to choose the right path.

¹⁹ “Delivering the Benefits of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law a Thought Leadership Series | Final Report Delivering the Benefits of the BIL Thought Leadership Series I,” 2024. <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/sites/volpe.dot.gov/files/2024-01/Delivering%20the%20Benefits%20of%20the%20BIL%20Thought%20Leadership%20Series%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

²⁰ Freemark, Yonah. “Federal Infrastructure Funds Could Fill Gaps in Local Transit Accessibility | Urban Institute.” www.urban.org, January 13, 2023. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/federal-infrastructure-funds-could-fill-gaps-local-transit-accessibility>.

²¹ www.georgetownclimate.org. “Issue Brief: Estimating the Greenhouse Gas Impact of Federal Infrastructure Investments in the IIJA,” December 16, 2021. <https://www.georgetownclimate.org/articles/federal-infrastructure-investment-analysis.html>.

The *Pew Research Center* came up with [recommendations](#) and insights of their own about what to do with IIJA funding, stating that engaged research, supportive infrastructure, and strengthening evaluation capacity are necessary for the formulation of effective projects. To do so, the formation of “clear, achievable goals for partnership and engagement efforts” is efficient in every level of government and will lead to success.²² *Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy* [found](#) that the impact of the IIJA will be based on its “ability for market participants to execute projects to take advantage” of the provisions.²³

VI. Conclusion.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has impacted millions of individuals and companies since its enactment in 2021. It will continue until 2026 unless it is renewed to extend longer, and thus it will continue to positively impact the U.S. GDP and American citizens.

Yet the significance of the IIJA notwithstanding, there have been very few Congressional committee hearings regarding the law. For sure, with such an enormous investment, it merits much more attention and evaluation than it has received to date. It is important to understand the effects of this type of investment. While some government agencies and private think tanks have examined the impact of the funds, considerable additional attention is warranted in the years ahead.

Many government agencies and policy centers have detailed how the IIJA has affected their own organization, or affected the policy area or sector that is closest to them. However, not many have done research on the overall scope of the law and how much it has achieved since its enactment. There have not been many future recommendations for use of the funds either, which could be a reason why Congress has not been talking about the IIJA as much as expected.

This report details five types of reports: those that focus on the scope of the IIJA in its entirety; those that assess the progress and pace of its implementation; those that evaluate the IIJA’s impact on specific sectors; the reports that specify the economic impact of it to date; and those that provide future recommendations for funds and disbursement. All these reports compiled together bring a new understanding to how the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act has affected Americans, both negatively and positively. Overall, there is much more content in the affirmative, which signals that the

²² Bednarek, Angela , Angie Boyce, and Alex Sileo. “Infrastructure Investments Should Be Evidence Informed and Equity Focused.” *pew.org*, October 18, 2022. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2022/10/18/infrastructure-investments-should-be-evidence-informed-and-equity-focused>.

²³ Medlock III, Kenneth. “Federal Energy Legislation and the Infrastructure Achilles’ Heel: The Energy Market Impacts of the IIJA, CHIPS Act, and IRA.” *Baker Institute*, August 7, 2023. <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/federal-energy-legislation-and-infrastructure-achilles-heel-energy-market-impacts-ijja>.

law is worth the money it costs and that it is benefiting most of the country. In the next two years of the law, more funds will be allocated to the states and more projects will be financed, which in turn will help the nation as a whole and even more Americans in their day-to-day lives.

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