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The State of U.S. Infrastructure.

Introduction

The \$18 trillion U.S. economy relies on a vast network of infrastructure from roads and bridges to freight rail and ports to electrical grids and internet provision. But the systems currently in place were built decades ago, and economists say that delays and rising maintenance costs are holding economic performance back. Civil engineers raise safety concerns as well, warning that many bridges are structurally deficient and that antiquated drinking-water and wastewater systems pose risks to public health. Meanwhile, Americans' international peers enjoy more efficient and reliable services, and their public investment in infrastructure is on average nearly double that of the United States.

As President Donald J. Trump enters his first budget negotiations with Congress, debate has intensified over how to improve the nation's infrastructure. Skeptics of federal spending have pushed for new models of private sector involvement, arguing that it is more efficient and cost-effective. Others argue that increased public spending will be necessary to meet the country's growing needs and ensure that development is in the public interest.

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The Council on Foreign Relations

by James McBride

October 6, 2017

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