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Why is Federal Infrastructure Policy So Difficult?

In an era of partisan strife, Americans of all political parties overwhelmingly agree on one issue: we need better infrastructure. Crumbling bridges, unsafe water, and communities without broadband threaten our nation's health, safety, and economic future. Yet the federal government's role has remained largely unchanged for generations. Why is it so hard to find consensus on such an obvious problem?

In my three decades of work with the federal government, including my time in the White House, I kept running into the same three challenges. Our path to a new federal infrastructure policy is blocked by irrational expectations around limited funding, a failure to appreciate the diversity of needs, and misaligned incentives.

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Let's start with expectations.

Continue reading.

The Brookings Institute

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