

Bond Case Briefs

Municipal Finance Law Since 1971

US History Shows Spending On Infrastructure Doesn't Always End Well.

The lasting problems of infrastructure aren't of need or construction, but of overbuilding, delayed costs and the challenges of thinking ahead.

Over the past two centuries, federal, state and municipal governments across the U.S. have launched wave after wave of infrastructure projects.

They built canals to move freight in the 1830s and 1840s. Governments subsidized railroads in the mid- and late 19th century. They created local sewage and water systems in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and then dams and irrigation systems through much of the 20th century. During World War II, massive amounts of public money were spent building and expanding ports, factories, airfields and shipyards. And after the war, highway construction - long a state and local project - became a federal endeavor.

Many of these projects did not end well. The problem wasn't that the country didn't need infrastructure - it did. And the troubles weren't the result of technical failures: By and large, Americans successfully built what they intended, and much of what they built still stands.

[Continue reading.](#)

governing.com

August 15, 2021 | Richard White

Copyright © 2024 Bond Case Briefs | bondcasebriefs.com