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Are the Build America Rules Slowing Infrastructure Progress?

State DOTs, transit agencies and the construction industry want the White House to make it easier to comply with rules designed to include American-made products in infrastructure projects.

A key selling point of President Joe Biden's infrastructure law was that it would help create jobs for more Americans. But new rules designed to pump up the domestic economy threaten to slow infrastructure projects and drive up their costs.

That's been the message from state transportation departments, transit agencies and construction groups in recent weeks. They have been trying to raise the alarm with Congress and put pressure on the Biden administration to fix the slow and laborious process of complying with the law.

Transportation industry leaders say they support the goals under the Build America, Buy America Act that were included in the 2021 federal infrastructure law. The rules expand existing mandates that require certain infrastructure built with federal dollars to use U.S.-made materials. But, leaders warn, American companies and regulators often are not prepared for such a big switch.

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Route Fifty

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