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## 2019 Steel Industry Update

The United States structural steel industry supplied fabricated and erected structural steel framing for over 10,000 buildings, bridges and industrial facilities through a network of producers, service centers, steel fabricators and erectors in 2017 down substantially from a peak of nearly 15,000 in 2006 and 2007. The decrease in market volume was the result of a downturn in overall construction activity. Total industry employment in 2017 was estimated to be in excess of 200,000 individuals in 2,300 firms down approximately 15% from 2006. Total industry revenue in 2017 was estimated to be in excess of 20 billion dollars.

### Infrastructure Bill:

- The American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) welcomes the Trump Administration's proposal aimed at fixing America's aging infrastructure. There is widespread agreement in the country, and among elected officials of both parties, that our nation's roads, bridges and other infrastructure require a sustained, long-term commitment of resources.
- We can put more Americans to work, improve quality of life in our cities, towns and rural areas and drive commerce across our nation by enacting a comprehensive infrastructure bill this year.
- AISC welcomes the use of alternative funding mechanisms in such a package as long as they adhere to the essential "Buy America" protections currently inherent in all federally-funded projects. The use of domestic steel and fabrication in those projects funded under a new infrastructure law would be fully consistent with the President's promise to "Buy American, Hire American."
- Our nation's bridges are dangerously behind on maintenance or inadequate for current needs. According to the National Bridge Inventory conducted by the Federal Highway Administration, one quarter of all U.S. bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- With such a large backlog of bridge projects it is essential to maintain or exceed current federal highway funding. Reductions in infrastructure maintenance will only exacerbate the problem and worsen the state of our bridges.
- Additionally, a long term infrastructure bill is essential in providing the states with long term, predictable and flexible financing to enable them to commit to major infrastructure needs like bridge repair and construction.



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## Buy America

- The Buy America law was created with the simple premise that federal funds invested in infrastructure projects should be used to buy steel melted, poured, and fabricated by the American workers and companies whose taxes are paying for those projects.
- Buy America policies provide incentives for companies to invest in American manufacturing and maximize American jobs in the iron and steel industries.
- Any weakening of the existing Buy America standard would undermine this job creation potential.
- Current Buy America provisions are effective. Currently, there is flexibility built into the program to allow waivers, and up to this point, we haven't seen any Buy America waivers for bridge projects - an indication that the program is working and is effective.
- In addition to retaining the current standards, it is important to close loopholes in the current policies that allow tax-payer funded projects to avoid Buy America requirements and ultimately cost American jobs.
- Buy America should extend to Public Private Partnerships (P3) and other projects that receive direct or indirect Federal financial assistance (e.g. Federal loans, loan guarantees, grants, and tax credits, etc.)
- As America looks to rebuild its aging critical infrastructure, our steel mills and steel fabricators have the capacity, the experience and the workers to take on this challenge. It makes no sense to invest U.S. taxpayer dollars to subsidize the bridge building capacity overseas to help them compete with our industry and our workers at home.

## American Steel

Together with its division the National Steel Bridge Alliance (NSBA), AISC represents nearly 1,000 U.S. businesses that fabricate and install the structural steel in America's great steel bridges, critical infrastructure projects, and skylines, and also has more than 40,000 Professional, Affiliate, and Student members. Ultimately, the U.S. structural steel industry directly supports nearly 200,000 jobs, of which 82,000 are in fabrication.