WHAT'S IN THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN?

In August, President Biden and a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators agreed on a plan that will provide $579 billion in infrastructure investments to improve roads, utilities and broadband.

Creators are key drivers of economic growth and recovery. In the short term, the bipartisan infrastructure plan will help ensure that creators have the resources they need to turn ideas into reality, but it leaves our future in limbo.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PLAN

Expands broadband access. High-speed internet access is absolutely essential in the creative economy. The deal includes $65 billion that the White House says will ensure every single American has access to broadband—a huge deal for rural communities of color, especially. The funding will also be used to force companies to offer low-priced plans and to encourage competition between companies.

Expands public transportation. Whether due to intentional exclusion or the impacts of gentrification, communities of color often lack quality public transit access, even in big cities. With transportation comes economic opportunity, and the $39 billion in public transit spending will be a boon to creators and their communities.

Provides environmental remediation. More than a quarter of Black and Hispanic Americans live near a toxic Superfund site. The deal invests $21 billion to clean up these sites and rectify this grave environmental injustice. Public health will be the greatest beneficiary, but clean communities will also spur economic growth and opportunity for local residents.
Reconnects communities. For as long as there have been economies, community relationships have played a critical role. Throughout the last century, Black neighborhoods were bulldozed in half to make room for highways. The results were devastating for our social relations and our economic ones. The original plan would have dedicated $24 billion to start righting these wrongs, but the bipartisan deal slashed the funding to just $1 billion.

Improves power and water infrastructure. The deal will fund $128 billion in improvements to our power and water infrastructure. Clean water and reliable electricity are bare essentials to live and work in the modern world, but recent disasters have shown how vulnerable these services often are.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Despite these important investments, the deal leaves the long-term future of communities of color and creators in serious limbo.

The plan focuses more on increasing usage of cars and planes, while doing little to combat climate change. Compared to the White House's original proposal, the bipartisan deal cut funding for electric vehicle infrastructure by 90% and eliminated clean energy tax credits altogether. At the same time, the deal includes $121 billion in funding for roads and another $25 billion for airports. While our country's transportation infrastructure certainly needs maintenance, it is irresponsible to increase our ability to pollute without making an equally substantial investment in climate change mitigation. As the impacts of climate change continue to intensify, investments in power infrastructure and environmental remediation may seem gravely insufficient.

The bipartisan plan has $0 for innovation, public housing, or schools. The original plan included nearly $1 trillion in investments in innovation, such as research funding for HBCUs, and building improvements, including public housing, schools, hospitals, and child care centers. Each of these investments would have greatly benefited communities of color, but each of them was zeroed-out during the bipartisan negotiations. As a result, we have missed a major opportunity to invest in our economic and social futures.