



INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

Newsletter

Clark Kaericher | Vice President, Government Affairs | 217-522-5512 x 296



August 24, 2021

The Infrastructure Council is an initiative of the Illinois Chamber that brings together Chamber members with a focus on increasing infrastructure investments in a strategic and thoughtful way to boost the overall business climate in Illinois. Our focus is on the public and private systems that are essential to Illinois businesses.

[Email Clark](#)

[View Past Newsletters](#)

It's a little early for the newsletter but a lot has happened, so why wait?

Illinois Chamber Joins US Chamber in Push for Massive Federal Infrastructure Package

On Monday morning, Illinois Chamber President & CEO Todd Maisch jointly-hosted a press conference on the bipartisan federal infrastructure package being consider in the US House of Representatives. Maisch was joined by Laura Weis, President & CEO of the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, Dan Mehan, President & CEO of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Neil Bradley, Chief Policy Officer at the US Chamber.

In the press call, Bradley said that \$9.8 billion would be coming to Illinois for infrastructure spending. Over \$600 million would come to the state for airport funding. He added that the infrastructure package affects both the daily lives of ordinary citizens and the economic life of the nation more broadly.

Discussing the potential \$9.8 billion for Illinois, Maisch said that the spending would be good not only for roads and bridges, but for all transportation forms including rail, waterways, and airports. Weis said that the federal funding would support many of the projects already underway in Champaign County. Answering a question from the press on any potential roadblocks to passage, Maisch said getting the bill “across the finish line” was the major impetus for the call.

[HR 3684](#), the Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act passed the US Senate by a vote of 69-30 earlier this month.

Read more here: [Illinois officials push for passage of massive infrastructure package](#)

Governor Pritzker Vetoes Bill to for the New Cairo Port

Cairo is the southernmost town in Illinois. Despite a prosperous start to the 20th century, it has been devastated by generational poverty. Nearly half the residents in Cairo live under the poverty line. Alexander County, where Cairo is located, lost over 36% of its population in the last decade according to the new census numbers. Residents in the area lack not only jobs, but basic conveniences like a gas station or a grocery store. Unlike most of southern Illinois, Cairo is 69% African American.

[SB 1770](#) (Sen. Belt/Rep. Greenwood) was intended to help facilitate the construction of a new port district in Cairo, Illinois. The Chamber has been following this project closely as it has the potential to revitalize not just Cairo but the entire region. At our Spring Council Meeting, Senator Fowler gave an update on the project. He said that nearly 80% of the nation’s river barge traffic passes by Cairo. Governor Pritzker recently visited Cairo to brag about the potential of this project to be a gamechanger.

The project was included in the 2019 capital bill but ran into a snag with Illinois land requirements. Illinois’ wetlands mitigation laws are many times stricter than that of the federal government and compliance with the state law isn’t financially feasible. Backers of the port introduced [SB 1770](#) which would exempt any construction projects at facilities or property within 6 miles of the Ohio River/Mississippi River confluence from the provisions of the Interagency Wetland Policy Act (IWPA) of 1989. **The bill was not controversial and passed out of both the House and the Senate unanimously.**

However, the Governor decided to inexplicably veto the measure. He cited demands of Illinois' environmentalist groups who have recently been flexing their muscles at the capital with the strong backing of the second floor. Whispers from the administration say the Governor plans to use federal COVID dollars to purchase enough land to satisfy Illinois' wetlands law. Here at the Chamber, while we are very much in favor of getting this project launched, we are dubious about the legality of a plan to divert COVID funds. It would be yet another heartbreak for the people of the region if the Governor breaks his promise to deliver these needed jobs. Even if the plan is successful, it'd be better to use COVID funds for their stated purpose of aiding small businesses and set aside a goofy Illinois law.

You can read the Governor's veto message of [SB 1770](#) here: https://www2.illinois.gov/HISNews/23782-SB_1770_Veto_Message.pdf

Session Update

The House and Senate will return to Springfield on Tuesday, August 31st for a special session. Two main items are on the agenda: changes to the legislative redistricting plan (recently, uh, heavily encouraged by a federal judge) and attempting to take up a widespread energy bill. Draft language for the energy bill has yet to surface but of interest to infrastructure council members it is rumored to contain funding for EV charging stations.

Additional special session dates have not been announced at this time. Senate President Harmon and House Speaker Welch have announced statewide hearings on the maps in the next several days.

Both Chambers will also be in session October 19th-21st and October 26th-28th for veto session.

Interested in the Latest on Electric Vehicles?

The Chamber is partnering with the Consulate of the Netherlands in Chicago to have a discussion about opportunities for companies in Illinois' electric vehicle industry. Joining me will be Chamber President Todd Maisch, Intersect Illinois, Tony Reinhart from Ford Motor Company and executives from EVBox and Elaad. The event takes place on September 7th at 9 am CST. You can register [here](#).

Bills Recently Signed Into Law

[HB 1755](#), **DCEO Port Districts** was signed into law. This bill provides that the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity shall evaluate eligibility of special districts for State and federal programs, grants, and

subsidies based on eligibility requirements set forth in their statutory charters. Amends the Kaskaskia Regional Port District Act. Provides that the Port District has power to apply for and accept grants, loans, or appropriations from the federal and State government (currently, only federal government) or any agency or instrumentality thereof, to be used for any of the purposes of the District and to enter into agreements with the federal and State government (currently, only federal government) in relation to such grants, loans or appropriations.

[HB 1916](#), **IDOT Construction Notification** was signed into law. This bill provides that the Department of Transportation shall update its policy for providing notification of construction projects to the public. Provides that the policy shall include a requirement that the Department contact the highway commissioner located in each Department district that will be impacted by a proposed construction project.

Illinois Chamber COVID-19 Reopening Survey

The Illinois Chamber has compiled a series of questions for members of the Illinois business community. This questionnaire is a consideration of your current COVID-19 policies in the workplace. Please take a moment to share your thoughts. All answers will help shape pro-business policy in Springfield.

Take the survey [here](#).

Illinois Chamber's Tax Institute To Host Quarterly Meeting

On Wednesday, September 8th the Illinois Chamber Tax Institute will host its quarterly meeting. The meeting will feature a discussion of unclaimed property issues with Allen Mayer, Chief of Staff for the Illinois Treasurer, Jennifer Waryjas of Jones Day and Troy Wangen of True Partners. The Illinois Chamber's Tax Institute Quarterly meeting is available to registrants to either attend in person or virtually.

Registration information can be found [here](#).

Save the Date: Illinois Chamber Annual Meeting

On Thursday, September 30th the Illinois Chamber will host its Annual Meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago. The event will take place between 11am-1:30 pm and feature keynote speaker Holly Sullivan, Vice President of Worldwide Economic Development for Amazon. The theme for this year's event is Global Growth Opportunities. [Register today!](#)

For more information contact Laurie Silvey at lsilvey@ilchamber.org.

Articles of Interest

[Boeing planes are used to launch Virgin Orbit rockets. Boeing's now going to invest.](#)

[AT&T marks first 5G connected car deal with GM](#)

[Democrats set to redo legislative maps as Republicans call foul](#)

[Amazon Plans to Open Large Retail Locations Akin to Department Stores](#)

[Crop giant ADM teams up with Marathon in renewable diesel push](#)

[Lead pipe replacement will be costly, create 6,000 Illinois jobs: new report](#)

[Trailer tax to decrease, vehicle trade-in cap to be lifted Jan. 1](#)

Until next time,

Clark

Connect with the Chamber

[Like Us on Facebook](#) [Follow us on Twitter](#) [Subscribe](#)



**ILLINOIS
CHAMBER**

Not a member and want to learn more about the Illinois Chamber - click [here](#) to contact Lanae Clarke

IL Chamber Infrastructure Council | 215 E Adams St., Springfield, IL 62701

Sent by ckaericher@ilchamber.org powered by

