



Women Construction Owners & Executives, USA

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of Women Construction Owners and Executives (WCOE), we write to urge Congress to not only to pass a bill to provide historic direct federal investment for the nation's infrastructure but to also ensure that any infrastructure bill continue and improve programs that create opportunities for women-owned firms to win more construction contract awards. Contracting opportunities for women-owned businesses must be included and increased any infrastructure package passed by Congress.

WCOE, USA is a national trade association representing the interests of women owners and executives in the construction industry. For 37 years, WCOE has continued to be the voice of women business owners in the industry and has worked to create fairer procurement processes and business environments so that female owners in the construction industry will have greater opportunities for success by utilizing Women-owned Small Business set-asides, sole source contracts, and DBE and WBE programs.

As Congress considers its major infrastructure package, it is important to ensure more effective coordination of federal resources for women business owners. Government reports show that the 5% women-owned small business (WOSB) goals have been met only twice since implemented in 1996 -- in 2015 and 2019. There must be incentives to meet WOSB goals and consequences for not meeting them.

Women-owned businesses still face challenges beyond those faced, in general, by small business entrepreneurs. Access to capital and other resources, including mentorship and networking, are key factors in the success of women in the construction industry.

More needs to be done to encourage and support new generations of women so they can be successful. The Infrastructure bill must include a renewed focus on the importance of women in the construction field and resources from key departments and agencies must be used effectively.

Sincerely,

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Cc: House Small Business Committee Members