

National Association of Minority Contractors 's Congressional Meeting

Rebuilding the infrastructure of America

WASHINGTON DC, WASHINGTON DC, USA, November 24, 2016
/EINPresswire.com/ -- National Association of Minority Contractors 's efforts are timely, given passage of the recent Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act in December 2015. The FAST Act authorizes the program at \$4.5 billion for fiscal years 2016 through 2020, including \$850 million for FY 2017 to be awarded by the Secretary of Transportation. The grants, totaling nearly \$800 million, will be combined with other funding from



federal, state, local, and private sources to support \$3.6 billion in [infrastructure](#) investment in 15 states and the District of Columbia. The legislation authorizes over \$300 billion in funding the transportation projects over the next five years, which potentially presents opportunities for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms. The new legislation also addresses a long-standing issue in the DBE community by requiring the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to undertake measures to ensure prompt payment to DBEs. President Elect Trump has stated that he plans to add a trillion dollars of public and private infrastructure spending to [rebuilding](#) America.

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*Wendell Stemley, NAMC
President*

“Rebuilding our infrastructure and communities” is an often-used phrase that is oversimplified; there is always rebuilding of the infrastructure and urban minority communities.

Who does Rebuilding the infrastructure of America Include?

The problem is we are seldom the owners, developers, contractor builders. or high-wage rate workers. We need to be

a partner in ownership, development, building, operators, and employers of the local community workforce. A process wherein public and private Fortune 500 companies continue building successful, quality projects while allowing diversity to be an integral part of the planning and execution of that success. The 18 cent gas tax is paid to fund the Department of Transportation by everyone so all communities should benefit and need to see a improvement in the quality of life.

NAMC is concerned that we are losing a generation of minority youth because of neglect and indifference. We can no longer ignore the obvious: African-American males 18-35 have the highest

unemployment rate in America. To that end, Minority Jobs Matter also.

The number of minorities and minority communities who are being left out of the rebuilding of America's infrastructure is daunting. For state agencies to award billions of dollars of work annually and certain minority groups only receive less than 1 percent of those dollars is unacceptable.

The NAMC 2016 Congressional Breakfast was held on Capitol Hill on September 15, 2016 at the Rayburn House Office Building. Representatives who attended the breakfast and addressed NAMC's issues and concerns were Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA); who spoke about the need for small business banking reform, Rep. Hank C. Johnson, Jr. (D-GA), who addressed government contracting with respect to rebuilding the infrastructure; Rep. Dave Brat (R-VA), debt ceiling and its impact on small businesses and the US economy; and Rick Allen (R-GA), a former construction company owner, who acknowledged the lack of loan options for small contractors in the industry

On Friday, September 16, Wendell Stemley, NAMC President, was invited to host Breaking the Color Barrier in Military & Federal Contracting, a panel sponsored by Congressman Hank C. Johnson, Jr. at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. The panel consisted of various government and industry representatives who assembled to provide an opportunity for minority- and women-owned small businesses to learn how to navigate the procurement process and market their businesses in the lucrative arena of defense contracts. Small business participation options along with NAMC recommendations included better tracking of both prime and subcontractor flow down requirements for small businesses and minority participation. We also recommend that Federal agencies offer "FAST PAY" to small business contractors. NAMC suggested small businesses support Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez's call for stronger compliance and oversight of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Small Business program within federal contracting and Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici's bill, H.R. 3175 to increase the government-wide small business procurement contract goal, the government-wide procurement goal for small disadvantaged businesses and women-owned businesses and the government-wide procurement goal for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses and HUBZONE (historically underutilized business zone) small businesses congressional support and compliance for legislative bills.

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