Dear Speaker Ryan:

The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the nation’s oldest and largest engineering business association – urges you to make infrastructure your top legislative priority this year. Historically, infrastructure bills have garnered broad bipartisan support. Such legislation should include:

- Significant direct Federal funding increases in transportation, water, communications, and other infrastructure programs.
- A sustainable, long-term revenue solution for the Highway Trust Fund.
- Permitting improvements and regulatory reforms to accelerate infrastructure development.
- Expanded incentivization of private investment in infrastructure.

We all know that we are not providing adequate funding for infrastructure, and the states alone cannot be responsible for filling the gap. From Presidents Lincoln to Eisenhower to Reagan and forward, the federal role has been recognized as indispensable to meeting the nation’s infrastructure needs.

Paying for such infrastructure has traditionally employed a “user pays” model – the fairest, most economical way to fund these programs. For transportation projects, this includes the motor fuels tax which funds the Highway Trust Fund; however, since this “tax” was last increased 25 years ago, it has lost 40 percent of its purchasing power. An adjustment of 25 cents per gallon would restore long-term viability to the Fund. At the same time, in this era of increased efficiency and diversification, including electric-powered vehicles, we should transition to a mileage-based system not dependent on any particular fuel or power source.

Regarding private investment, we believe that states and local communities as well as the Federal Government should avail themselves of maximum prudent engagement of private investors in public projects. Congress should expand and improve existing loan programs and tax-preferred financing options to facilitate private investment. However, considering that most projects will not be well-suited to a public-private partnership approach, we should not rely principally on private investment as a panacea for our funding deficit.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months to develop and pass an aggressive infrastructure investment program that will redress severe shortfalls and support a thriving 21st century economy.

Sincerely,