Quality of life in the United States is indelibly linked to the quality of our infrastructure, which directly affects access to jobs, housing, retail, education, and more. In addition, large infrastructure projects provide numerous jobs and are an investment in developing regions throughout the country.

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the 6,900 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in all matters concerning their quality of life, academic opportunities, and professional careers after graduation. Consequently, we support all policies and developments that increase the availability, quality, and affordability of transportation services and infrastructure used by students. We further support all measures that strengthen federal funding for both basic and applied research and enable major scientific innovations. We stress that such investments in research and development are essential to increase the competitiveness of our economy, to improve the overall infrastructure renewal process, and to support management and labor in bringing high-impact projects to completion. For this reason, we have in the past advocated that increases in infrastructure spending be matched with appropriate increases in spending on research and development.

The IMAGINE Act, currently S. 3341 in the Senate and H.R. 6653 in the House, is a bipartisan bill “to encourage the research and use of innovative materials and associated techniques in the construction and preservation of the domestic transportation and water infrastructure system, and for other purposes.”¹ This piece of legislation develops the type of infrastructure research investment we have supported in our previous statements and advocacy efforts. It creates “innovative material innovation hubs” that will directly coordinate, conduct, and fund research into new materials to improve infrastructure. It also directs the Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency to create programs that provide funding to use innovative materials in infrastructure projects to reduce maintenance costs. These investments will help further improve US infrastructure and therefore the US economy. For these reasons, we encourage all members of Congress to cosponsor the IMAGINE Act and pass this bipartisan legislation.

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