



August 27, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of Common Sense America (CSA), I write to congratulate you and Secretary Duffy on the extraordinary pace of American building. In a single year, your administration has launched the most ambitious slate of transportation projects in generations. As our nation marks 250 years of independence, Americans can once again watch their country build.

Every one of those projects rests on the same material. The United States consumes more than 120 million tons of cement each year, and roughly half of it goes into federally funded highways, bridges, tunnels, ports, rail, and transit. Cement is the one input that no project on your list can substitute away from. It is also an input our government does not require to be American-made.

Washington Dulles International Airport. The \$22.5 billion transformation you announced from the Oval Office on July 29, with four rebuilt concourses, five million square feet of new and renovated terminal space, and the retirement of the mobile lounges that have served since 1962, will be among the largest airport rebuilds in our history. Airfield work is cement-intensive above all else. America's airports consume roughly 1.5 million metric tons of cement annually, and nearly 90 percent of that goes into runways and airfield pavement. A single runway and taxiway reconstruction, such as the work at JFK's Runway 4L-22R, can require 220,000 cubic yards of concrete on its own.

A Brand-New Air Traffic Control System. Secretary Duffy's plan to replace the nation's aging analog air traffic infrastructure, backed by a \$12.5 billion down payment in the One Big Beautiful Bill against a \$31.5 billion total, is the most consequential aviation undertaking in two generations. Alongside it, \$835.8 million is rebuilding towers and facilities at 41 airports nationwide. New radar and radios are the headline, but every one of those towers, TRACONs, and en route centers is a hardened concrete structure expected to stand against wind, blast, and fifty years of service.

The New York Penn Station Transformation. By removing the MTA from the project, your administration saved taxpayers \$120 million and put a generational rebuild back on schedule. Rail is quietly among the most cement-dependent sectors in the economy. American railroads install 12 to 15 million concrete ties each year, concrete tie use on Class I railroads now exceeds 72 percent, and cement stabilizes the track beds and subgrades beneath them before a single rail



is laid. The platforms, tunnels, and load-bearing structures at Penn Station will be concrete from the ground up.

The Francis Scott Key Bridge. Your administration confronted a cost estimate that had ballooned from \$1.8 billion to more than \$5 billion, drove it back down, and got steel and concrete moving in the Patapsco again. Marine bridge construction is among the most demanding cement applications there is, requiring piers, foundations, and deck sections engineered to resist saltwater intrusion for a century.

The Blatnik Bridge. The \$1.058 billion Secretary Duffy delivered to replace the 65-year-old I-535 span between Superior and Duluth, with construction beginning this fall, is exactly the kind of heartland project that has waited far too long. It joins the \$600 million rebuild of the I-95 Delaware River Bridge, work your administration has rightly framed as reviving Eisenhower's vision. That vision is built from cement quite literally: the Interstate Highway System holds an estimated 48 million metric tons of it.

These are American projects, built by American workers, and they deserve American materials. Yet the United States now imports more than 20 percent of the cement it consumes, and that share is climbing. Turkey alone accounts for nearly a third of our imports. China produces roughly half the world's cement, more than twenty times U.S. output, and as its property sector contracts, its producers will look for somewhere to send the surplus. We have seen this film before, when toxic Chinese drywall contaminated approximately 100,000 American homes. Foreign cement frequently bypasses the production standards and third-party verification that American cement must meet. When it fails, it fails in a runway, a bridge pier, or a tunnel liner, long after the ribbon has been cut.

The most direct fix is also the most overlooked. When Congress wrote the Build America, Buy America Act, Section 70917(c) expressly carved cement and cementitious materials out of the definition of construction materials. The result is that the iron and steel in a federally funded bridge must be American, while the cement binding that bridge together need not be. Closing this gap requires nothing more than striking an exemption Congress itself created. With the surface transportation authorization expiring September 30, the BUILD America 250 Act is the vehicle to do it, and we urge you and Secretary Duffy to press for a domestic cement purchasing preference before that deadline passes.

On trade, we urge you to designate cement a critical material for national security and to direct a Section 232 investigation into the effect of cement imports on that security, the same protection already extended to steel, aluminum, and copper. We further urge USTR to expand its Section 301 review of structural excess capacity beyond the sixteen economies currently under investigation to include Turkey, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, each of which sustains an export-driven cement surplus through state subsidy and directed industrial policy. An industry that contributes \$159 billion to our economy and supports 577,000 American jobs should not be left as the only major construction input without a trade remedy or a purchasing preference.



National security starts with strong foundations, and that means ensuring every bag of cement used in our public works is manufactured right here at home. You are building more, and building it faster, than any administration in living memory. We ask only that what you build be American all the way down.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Steve Crim".

Steve Crim

President and Founder
Common Sense America

cc: The Honorable Sean P. Duffy, Secretary of Transportation