

**IMAGINE Act of 2021**  
**Sponsored by Senators Whitehouse and Collins**

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The Innovative Materials in American Growth and Infrastructure Newly Expanded (IMAGINE) Act is designed to encourage the research and use of innovative construction materials and techniques in order to speed up the deployment and extend the life of transportation and water infrastructure. This legislation would advance the study and deployment of projects that utilize cutting edge materials and techniques, which can help speed construction and improve resilience to flooding and corrosion.

**Interagency Innovative Materials Task Force:**

A Task Force would be created to assess existing standards and test methods for the use of innovative materials in infrastructure, identify key barriers in the standards area that inhibit broader market adoption, and develop new methods and protocols, as necessary, to better evaluate innovative materials. The Task Force would be chaired by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and bring together the Federal Highway Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other relevant agencies organizations.

**Innovative Materials Hub:**

The Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with leaders of other agencies, would designate through a competitive selection process the development of innovative material hubs located throughout the United States to further drive research and development of different innovative materials for use in infrastructure projects.

**Research:**

The bill would authorize \$8 million for the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center to collaborate with relevant State and Tribal agencies and other stakeholders to research and develop innovative materials, prioritizing work targeting large span bridges, highway reconstruction and rehabilitation, rural roads, and coastal resiliency.

**Innovative Bridge Program:**

The bill would authorize \$65 million for the FHWA (FY 2020 to 2024) for a new grant program available for the design and installation of innovative materials in bridge projects. Special consideration would be given for “at-risk” coastal bridge projects, projects in rural areas prone to inland flooding, and bridge retrofits. Domestic sourcing and nontraditional production techniques would also be given preference.

**Water Infrastructure Innovation Program:**

In addition, the bill would authorize \$65 million for EPA (FY 2020 to 2024) for a new grant program available for the use of innovative materials in the design and installation of wastewater transport and treatment systems and drinking water treatment and distribution systems in small to medium-sized communities. Special consideration would be given to areas prone to saltwater intrusion or flooding.

**Expanded Eligibility for Federal Share:**

The bill would expand eligibility for federal share funds to include new innovative construction materials and techniques.