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Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Extension Opens Window for Congress to Make Walking and Biking Safer Nationwide

Rails to Trails Conservancy rallies public to push Congress to ensure next surface transportation law delivers connected trails, walking and biking infrastructure Americans demand and deserve.

WASHINGTON—The continuing resolution signed by the president this week includes a partial extension of the nation’s surface transportation law, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The law, which was slated to expire on Sept. 30, will now be extended through Dec. 11.

Rails to Trails Conservancy, the nation’s largest active transportation advocacy organization, sees the extension period as an opportunity for Congress to revisit the debate about what will be prioritized in the next surface transportation law. RTC [supports a bold agenda](#) that includes strengthening the [Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program](#), the only program dedicated to connecting trail networks and a significant missing link in efforts to create safe walking and cycling routes across rural, suburban and urban regions.

“This continuing resolution creates a new opportunity for Congress to dig deeper and deliver a surface transportation bill that meets the needs of communities across the American landscape. Hundreds of regions are investing in connected active transportation networks that serve every single state because they know that safe routes to walk and bike are fundamental to quality communities. The economy benefits, congestion is reduced, and people’s quality of life is better. Active transportation infrastructure is essential; now we need a law that delivers on the demand and opportunity,” said Kevin Mills, RTC’s vice president of policy.

Since debate about investment in trail, walking and biking projects intensified in early 2025, RTC has organized nearly 50,000 messages to Congress with stories about the myriad ways that safe, connected walking and biking infrastructure improves lives. In February of this year, nearly 1,200 small businesses, elected officials and organizations representing sectors from manufacturing to tourism [signed a letter to Congress](#) calling for the protection and growth of federal programs dedicated to trails and active transportation. RTC is calling on the public to continue to [share their stories with Congress](#) about the impact of trails and active transportation on their communities and in their everyday lives.

“The vast majority of Americans support trails. Support for investments in connected walking and biking infrastructure is widely supported by Republican, Democratic and Independent voters alike. The benefits of making it safer and easier to walk and bike eclipse partisan politics. As Congress negotiates the next

surface transportation bill, we need as many people as possible to let Congress know that these investments matter,” said Mills.

RTC’s [federal policy agenda](#) includes strengthening the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, the only program dedicated to connected trail networks. Decades of federal, state and local investment has established a foundation for the nation’s active transportation system that includes over 42,500 miles of multiuse trails, hundreds of developing trail and active transportation networks, and an annual economic impact of more than \$34 billion that could quadruple with improved connectivity. Current public funding falls far short of the scale of demand and urgency to provide safe walking and biking routes nationwide. Programs that invest in this infrastructure are woefully oversubscribed, limiting progress that directly correlates with the safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life of Americans across rural, urban and suburban communities. [RTC’s agenda outlines a strategy](#) to build the nation’s essential walking and biking infrastructure through investment and policy reform to deliver the active transportation infrastructure America needs.

Rails to Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. RTC’s flagship initiatives, the [Great American Rail-Trail®](#), [TrailNation™](#), and [TrailLink](#) make possible a future where trails connect everyone, everywhere by advocating, building infrastructure, securing investments, and telling the story of America’s trails. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and [@railstotrails](#) on social media. Use TrailLink, RTC’s trail-finder website and app, to get maps, guides, photos, reviews and navigation for more than 40,000 miles of multiuse trails.