



The Honorable Ron Wyden  
U.S. Senate  
221 Dirksen Senate Office  
Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
U.S. Senate  
239 Dirksen Senate Office  
Building  
Washington, DC 20510

July 20, 2023

Dear Chair Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo,

The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20006

**T** (800) 242 3837  
**F** (202) 626 7547

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) represents over 96,000 architects and design professionals. Since 1857, we have been committed to safeguarding the public’s health, safety, and welfare, and to improving our nation’s quality of life through design. Inextricable to that mission is the AIA’s commitment to improving the efficiency and adaptive reuse of the existing built environment, and learning environments are no exception. We respectfully submit the following support for S. 1523, the School Infrastructure Modernization Act of 2023.

Educational facilities remain a consistent priority across America and an invaluable community feature. According to the [Build America Summit](#) public opinion poll, 69% of Americans believe schools are among the most important community feature to receive a consistent level of public funding—second only to roads/streets—and 73% of Americans consider healthy schools a “must have.” Further, these facilities are representative of our culture, shared history and a tangible record of who we are.

As Sen. Kaine prefaced in his introductory statement, in Virginia alone, 1,000+ K-12 schools are at least 50 years old, representing more than half of all the K-12 schools in the Commonwealth. While porous federal data suggests that the national footprint of similarly-aged public school buildings is vast, the [2021 State of Our Schools report](#) on America’s PK-12 public school facilities lays bare that the U.S. is underinvesting in capital outlays by approx. \$85 billion each year. For the first time in 20 years, renovations have overtaken new construction in architectural billings in America according to AIA’s [Architecture Billings Index](#). We are encouraged by educational facilities being a part of this industry trend and recognize the significant capacity amending the prior use role would add to rehabilitation expenditures.

AIA is committed to federal policies that support climate action for human and ecological health. Architects are keen on the power of learning environments to

inspire learners, educators, administrators, and campus communities alike. As natural facilitators and problem-solvers, architects stand ready to support new policies that create a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable society.

Thus, we support the School Infrastructure Modernization Act of 2023. This legislation would significantly advance pedagogy through facilities that promote lifelong learning in safe, welcoming and equitable environments, as well as reducing both embodied and operational carbon through the federal Historic Tax Credit—a [proven incentive](#) for revitalizing historic built resources in all communities.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact AIA's Federal Relations staff: Blake Nanney ([blakenanney@aia.org](mailto:blakenanney@aia.org)) or Jaelon Moaney ([jaelonmoaney@aia.org](mailto:jaelonmoaney@aia.org)).

Thank you for your time and your consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EGR', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Emily Grandstaff-Rice, FAIA  
President  
The American Institute of Architects

CC: The Honorable Tim Kaine, U.S. Senator  
The Honorable Mark Warner, U.S. Senator