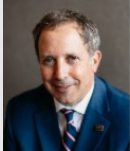




THE CONNECTOR



KEVIN ARTL
PRESIDENT & CEO

LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING

JULY 2025



Key Tax Policy Wins in Budget Reconciliation



The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) scores significant wins in the budget reconciliation bill passed by Congress signed into law tomorrow. The effort represents the culmination of over two-years of advocacy and lobbying for these significant tax policy victories for the industry.

Why it matters: This bill addresses key financial concerns, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth for engineering firms.

- **R&D Deductibility:** Permanently restored starting in 2025, this change allows engineering firms to invest more in innovation.
 - Firms with less than \$31 million in gross receipts benefit from retroactive relief for 2022-2024, enhancing financial stability.

Business tax benefits:

- Section 199A Passthrough Deduction: Extended permanently at 20%, supporting small businesses in maintaining their tax advantages.
- Corporate Tax Rate: Retained at 21%, providing a stable tax environment conducive to planning and investment.
- Increased SALT Cap: Raised from \$10,000 to \$40,000 with annual adjustments through 2029, benefiting high-income earners in the industry.

Educational and Capital Investments:

- Section 127 Provisions: Employers can continue to assist employees with educational expenses and student loan repayments, fostering workforce development.
- Interest Deductibility and Full Expensing: Permanently restored for certain capital investments, encouraging infrastructure growth.

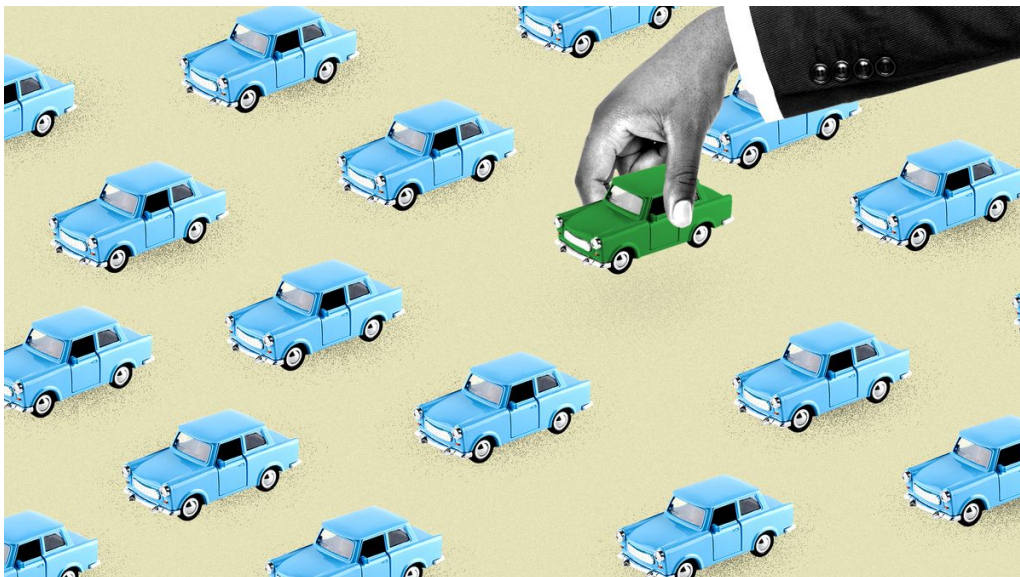
The bottom line: The ACEC Research Institute found that [82% of firms used their tax savings from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act](#) to hire new employees.

Zoom Out: The additional industry activity fueled by tax cuts would generate \$1.4 trillion in revenue for the broader U.S. economy in 2026. According to the ACEC Research Institute, the additional industry activity would support nearly 7 million jobs.

Zoom in: For a comprehensive look at the legislation and its implications for the industry, join ACEC Illinois and CBIZ for an in-depth webinar. Experts will break down the Trump Administration's One Big Beautiful Bill Act—covering business and individual tax updates, changes to the SALT cap, and energy incentives—while offering tax planning strategies tailored to architecture and engineering firms.

Register Here

NEPA reforms aim to fast-track infrastructure projects



The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has issued three sets of revisions to

its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementation procedures to expedite infrastructure development.

Why it matters: These changes are designed to fast-track the construction of roads, bridges, broadband, and energy installations, which can significantly reduce project delays and costs.

- USDOT has unified six separate procedures into one comprehensive order, streamlining the NEPA review process for most modal administrations.
- The reforms align with the Trump Administration's strategy to simplify environmental review processes, aiming for more efficient and timely project approvals.

Details: The updates include implementing strict deadlines and page limits on environmental reviews, clarifying NEPA's applicability only to federal actions with significant environmental effects, and creating categorical exclusions to minimize redundant analyses.

- Notably, the revisions were coordinated with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and are supported by the BUILDER Act amendments and recent Supreme Court decisions.
- USDOT emphasizes that these reforms provide a "one-stop shop" for NEPA reviews, enhancing efficiency across its administrations.

What's next: With these changes, USDOT aims to enhance the efficiency of infrastructure development, potentially accelerating project delivery and reducing costs for stakeholders.

- The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has engaged with the CEQ to provide feedback on these reforms, aiming to ensure effective implementation.

□ Trump Administration reshapes USDOT priorities



The Trump Administration has shifted USDOT's focus away from climate and equity

provisions to prioritize economic impact and efficient project delivery.

Why it matters: These changes affect federal discretionary grants, impacting applicants' strategies and potentially altering the demographics of grant recipients.

- Applicants must adapt language to align with new priorities, focusing on economic opportunity zones and family-centered projects.
- States and cities face uncertainty in receiving previously announced funds, leading to legal actions and strategic adjustments.

The big picture: USDOT's actions include reviewing previously awarded projects and adjusting Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) to align with new executive orders.

- This involves rescinding Biden-era memos and prioritizing projects in line with immigration enforcement and economic analysis.

Grant programs affected:

- Safe Streets for All (SS4A)
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)
- FTA Low or No Emission Grant Program
- Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program
- Bridge Investment Program
- Competitive Highway Bridge Program
- Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART)
- Regional Infrastructure Accelerators Program (RIA)
- High Priority-Commercial Motor Vehicle (HP-CMV)
- Buses and Bus Facility Competitive Grant Program

What's next: States and cities are exploring alternative funding and strategic partnerships with USDOT to continue initiatives and expedite project delivery.

- In Illinois, the state has joined other states to promote transit and infrastructure projects through the Clean Rides Network, aiming to continue green initiatives despite federal funding cuts.
- Legal challenges are being pursued by cities and advocacy groups to counteract the pauses in funding.

Conclusion: Changing merit criteria could lead to a shift in grant recipient demographics, with a possible acceleration in project delivery rates.

- Applicants are leveraging local partnerships and adapting to new criteria by focusing on economic analysis and compliance with federal priorities.
- The impact of these changes on long-term project execution and funding distribution remains to be seen.



ACEC Catch Up



Changes at CDOT

Tom Carney resigns as CDOT Commissioner, Craig Turner assumes role as acting Commissioner. ACEC Illinois thanks Tom for his years of dedicated public service and leadership in advancing the city's infrastructure. His contributions have shaped major transportation projects and left a lasting impact on Chicago's mobility and engineering community. ACEC Illinois looks forward to continuing to work with Craig Turner, now in his new role as Acting CDOT Commissioner.

DBE Litigation Update

In the MAMCO v. USDOT case, the court granted a 90-day stay on June 5, 2025, to allow settlement discussions between the parties after a joint motion was filed by MAMCO and USDOT. The parties are seeking to have the DBE program declared unconstitutional, while 20 states submitted an amicus brief in support of that outcome. Also filed were four amicus briefs—filed by DBE advocacy groups, veteran organizations, municipalities and [21 states \(including Illinois\)](#)—to oppose the move and defend the program's legality. ACEC Illinois has been engaged with IDOT and CTA to monitor the situation.

House T&I Chairman Sam Graves Outlines Goals for Surface Transportation Reauthorization

According to Graves, the next surface transportation bill aims to refocus federal investments on core infrastructure needs like roads and bridges, streamline project permitting to cut costs and delays, and restore the user-pays model by fixing the Highway Trust Fund. It will emphasize state flexibility and limit federal mandates that inflate costs or delay projects. With the current authorization set to expire in 2026, lawmakers are prioritizing practical, efficient solutions over political agendas to get America building again.



WEBINAR

JULY 30, 2025
1 PM – 2 PM
via Zoom Webinars

ANALYZING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Join us for an in-depth webinar analyzing the Trump Administration's One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), a sweeping tax reform package that extends key provisions from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), addresses the SALT deduction cap, and introduces new tax benefits affecting all member firms.

Our A&E tax experts will provide a detailed breakdown of the Act's major components and discuss what these changes mean for architecture and engineering firms, including:

- Business tax provisions
- Individual tax updates, including any SALT cap changes
- The future of energy credits and incentives
- Permanency of any proposed changes
- Key revenue offsets

We'll close with actionable next steps and tax planning strategies to help guide you through these changes. Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of significant policy changes and ensure you're ready for what's next.

SPEAKERS:

- SCOTT SUTTON, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CBIZ ADVISORS, LLC
- JENNY RAY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CBIZ ADVISORS, LLC
- JACK POLANCICH, TAX MANAGER, CBIZ ADVISORS, LLC
- KATHARINE MOTTLEY, VICE PRESIDENT OF TAX AND WORKFORCE POLICY, ACEC NATIONAL

HOSTED BY:



[Register Here](#)





Linda is fresh off advocacy trips to Springfield and Capitol Hill, where she championed the engineering community. In this episode, she shares insights into the top issues driving policy discussions at both the state and federal levels, and how these battles will shape the future for firms and infrastructure in Illinois and beyond.



**LINDA MOEN,
PRESIDENT, EFK MOEN, LLC**

[Listen Here](#)

Fundraiser Lunch for Cong. Delia Ramirez

Join us in supporting Congresswoman Delia Ramirez, a steadfast ally for Illinois' engineering community, at a fundraiser lunch on July 25.

Why it matters: Delia has been instrumental in advancing key infrastructure projects like ReBuild Illinois and IIJA implementation, making her a crucial advocate for modern infrastructure.

- She's partnered with ACEC Illinois on priorities such as funding for I-290, the Blue Line, and Red Line improvements.

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Event Details:

- ☐ Date: Friday, July 25
- ☐ Time: 12:00 PM
- ☐ Location: HDR, 9450 Bryn Mawr, Ste 400, Rosemont, IL
- ☐ Tickets: \$150
- ☐ Sponsorships: \$250, \$500 or more

☐ RSVP: Register online or email bethany@acecil.org if you plan to attend and bring a check.



Stay engaged: With Washington's unpredictability, it's vital to support leaders like Cong. Ramirez who advocate for us.

[Register Today!](#)

Evening of Hope 2025

Thursday July 31, 2025 6:00- 10:00 pm
Skyline Loft/ Bridgeport Art Center
1200 W. 35th Street, Chicago IL.



EVENING OF HOPE

A FUNDRAISER FOR ONE FAMILY ILLINOIS
FORMERLY KNOWN AS SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS

THURSDAY, JULY 31, 2025

SKYLINE LOFT
BRIDGEPORT ART CENTER
1200 W. 35TH STREET,
CHICAGO IL.



2025 HONOREES:

Jennifer "Sis" Killen
Superintendent
Cook County Department of Transportation and
Highways

Janice R. Thomas
Deputy Executive Director – External Affairs
METRA

Michael McMurray
Commissioner
Chicago Department of Aviation

Cassandra Rouse
Executive Director
Illinois Tollway

Randy Conner
Commissioner
City of Chicago Dept. of Water

VIP RECEPTION AT 4:30 P.M.*
THE PARTY STARTS AT 6 P.M.

*VIP RECEPTION OPEN TO SILVER
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Sponsorship and Tickets available at <https://eveofhope25.givesmart.com>

Evening of Hope 2025 | Powered By GiveSmart

BOARD MEMBER

Spotlight

WILLIAM KLINGNER

KLINGNER

& ASSOCIATES, P. C.

Engineers • Architects • Surveyors



1. How long have you been a part of ACEC IL?
15 years

2. What positions have you held within the ACEC-IL organization?

Prior to joining the ACEC-IL board, I have spent two years as the Chairman of the ACEC-IL USACE - Rock Island Committee.

3. What is the number one reason firms should become an ACEC-IL Member?

Advocacy. ACEC-IL has an amazing staff and is relentless in its advocacy for our industry and our firms. The organization somehow manages to balance tax policy, state and federal funding, management training, and political fundraising—all while hosting fun events. At ACEC-IL, member firms feel like they are part of something special and that they are making a difference in the industry.

4. Why should individuals become involved in ACEC Illinois?

Connection. The A/E industry is quite unique in the sense of camaraderie and collaboration that occurs between firms—especially among ACEC-IL member firms. The openness among peers within the organization has been remarkable. We have the opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of others while staying current on best practices and industry changes. With that knowledge, we can bring new ideas and strategies back to our own firm to better serve our clients. I've appreciated that ACEC-IL embraces a "rising tide lifts all ships" mentality.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time outdoors with my three daughters—Hattie (8), Matilda (4), and Bea (1). Outside of work and family time, I try to fill every available minute with golf. The challenge is that those available minutes seem to grow fewer and fewer with each passing year!

6. Tell us one fun fact about yourself.

I caught the travel bug early in life. My dad (also an engineer) took us on long family road trips every year. Over a 10-year span, we visited all 50 states—driving to 47 of them. I hope to do something similar with my own kids, though hopefully with a bit less time behind the wheel.



COMMITTEE CHAIR

Spotlight

ROBERT VERHEGGEN



1. How long have you been a part of ACEC IL?

8 years

2. What position(s) have you held within the ACEC-IL organization?

Innovations Committee member, Water & Environment Committee Chair (formerly IEAP/IDNR Committee)

3. Tell us a little bit about the committee you chair.

The Water and Environment Committee's purpose is to provide dialogue and education regarding topics generally relevant to the IEPA and IDNR. A recent discussion and presentation related to Lead Service Lines.

4. What's the number one reason people should join your committee?

The exposure to IEPA and IDNR is a key benefit to joining the Water & Environment Committee. Additionally, participating in discussions with other individuals in the environmental and natural resource industries is encouraged at each of our meetings.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time, I enjoy hiking, exploring parks and historical sites, and watching movies, especially 80s and 90s films.

6. Tell us one fun fact about yourself.

I have worked as a contract archaeologist in 12 different states and on beaches of both the Atlantic and Pacific.

Member Updates:

Oates Associates Expands Leadership Team



Collinsville, IL - Guided by a vision for strategic growth, Oates Associates, Inc. - a 100% employee-owned civil and structural engineering and surveying firm - has expanded its leadership team, reinforcing the firm's commitment to cultivating talent from within and positioning the firm for long-term success. Senior Project Managers Haley Coons, PE, SE and Bill Tindall, PE, PTOE have been promoted to Directors, recognizing their leadership, mentorship, technical expertise, and contributions to continued growth.

Both Coons and Tindall have developed their expertise over the past 20 years and have been with Oates Associates for more than 10 years. Coons leads the building structural group, guiding cross-functional teams for collaboration across multiple disciplines to build relationships and drive firm growth. Tindall specializes in transportation and traffic planning and design, bringing thoughtful and innovative solutions for infrastructure challenges along with a hands-on approach to the development and success of the firm's engineers.

"We are seeing our goals take shape as new talent joins Oates Associates and our experienced professionals advance into leadership positions to continue to support our growth," said Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Rensing, PE, SE. "By investing in the leadership potential of our employee-owners, we are strengthening our ability to implement strategic visions, serve clients, and develop staff. Haley and Bill have always leveraged their engineering capabilities to grow and diversify our client base and mentor engineers - and we are excited to have them join the leadership team to help shape our future."

Coons and Tindall will work alongside Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Rensing, PE, SE; President and Chief Operating Officer Bruce Shopp, PE, SE; fellow Directors Michael Busch, PE, PTOE, Thomas Cissell, PE, PTOE, LEED AP BD+C, Julie Goodin, CPA, and Cheryl Vancil, CPSM; and Information Technology Manager Joel Italiano. They will continue to serve as technical resources and client-facing leaders.

Now in its 45th year, Oates Associates is a 100% employee-owned multi-disciplined design firm with offices in Collinsville and Belleville, Illinois and St. Louis and St. Charles, Missouri. Oates provides engineering and surveying services for transportation and building projects. Specifically, this includes transportation and traffic engineering, ADA transition planning, stormwater management, site design, building and bridge structural design and inspections, surveying, and drone operations. For more information, visit www.oatesassociates.com or call 618.345.2200.

Elizabeth Gallagher Named Benesch's CEO-Elect

CHICAGO (July 2, 2025) – Benesch is pleased to announce that Elizabeth Gallagher, PE, SE has been named CEO-Elect. She will assume the role of President and CEO beginning in 2027.

Elizabeth joined Benesch in 2014 and has served as the North Regional Manager since 2020, overseeing operations and business development throughout Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Leveraging more than 30 years of experience, Elizabeth has successfully guided the growth of the North Region both in size and expertise. Previously, she led the Illinois Division, which delivered award-winning infrastructure improvements across the state. Prior to joining Benesch, Elizabeth led a Program Management team delivering a \$2.6 billion Capital Program for a Chicago transit agency. Her experience also includes the management of large-scale projects and programs for agencies such as the Illinois State Toll



Highway Authority, Chicago Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Transportation.

Named by Crain's Chicago Business as one of 2020's Notable Women in Construction and Design, Elizabeth is widely recognized in the engineering community. She engages with multiple industry organizations including the American Council of Engineering Companies and the Women's Transportation Seminar.

"Elizabeth has long been an integral part of Benesch's success, and I am confident that she will be an exceptional leader as the company enters its next chapter," said Kevin Fitzpatrick, Benesch's current President and CEO. Kevin has held the role since 2020 and under his leadership, Benesch has experienced significant growth, diversified its services and greatly expanded its geographic footprint.

Elizabeth will work alongside Kevin to transition into the role, assuming the responsibilities of President and CEO officially in January of 2027.

About Benesch

Benesch is a multi-disciplined professional services firm specializing in transportation engineering (aviation, bridges, railroad and roadway), planning, environmental, water/wastewater, geotechnical, landscape architecture, site development and construction engineering and inspection. Benesch has over 1000 employees located across the US and is ranked #101 on *Engineering News Record's* Top 500 Design Firm list as of 2025. Learn more at www.benesch.com.

NOW A LEAD SERVICE LINE FREE COMMUNITY

VILLAGE OF

CARPENTERSVILLE, ILLINOIS -

The Village of Carpentersville recently accepted three awards for its Lead Service Line Replacement Program. The three awards are the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Illinois Engineering Excellence Honor Award, ACEC of Illinois Judge's Choice Award in the Water Resources



category, and an ACEC National Recognition Award. This project, constructed by Joel Kennedy Construction Corp., was designed and managed by Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI).

In 2020, the Village of Carpentersville set out on an ambitious mission: to remove all lead water services from its community, 400 in total – at zero cost to its residents. With full completion in just over four years, this project highlights the power of community collaboration and a shared commitment to public health.

Planning and community outreach began in Winter, 2021 with resident notifications, public meetings, resident surveys, and in-home assessments. In June 2023, the Village of Carpentersville received \$4 million of principal forgiveness funding through the IEPA's Public Water Supply Loan Program (PWSLP).

Construction began on October 2, 2023, with minimally invasive horizontal directional drilling used to replace the services. Although it was anticipated as a multi-phased project, both the Village and EEI continued to be proactive and collect the remaining replacement consent forms. As a result of hard work and determination, all outstanding lead water service lines were successfully replaced in Phase A. The project was completed ahead of schedule and below budget at no cost to the residents.

The community can now proudly say they are lead service line-free, having removed all 400 lead services. The Village's commitment was driven by its continued focus on maintaining its residents' physical and financial well-being. Through careful planning, public outreach, and financial stewardship, this project is a testament to how municipalities can tackle big challenges with creativity and care to build a safer, healthier future for their residents.



Healthy Politics Episode 10: How Healthcare is Driving Federal Debt and Shaping the Economy

LISTEN
HERE

This episode covers the Senate spending bill and its effect on House provisions and Medicaid, efforts to reform prior authorizations and association health plans, and rising healthcare costs from the latest Milliman Medical Index. Don't miss it!

Since this episode was recorded, the Senate has passed the bill. The discussion remains highly relevant, as it sets the stage for what to expect once both chambers finalize the legislation.



7.30.2025 - Webinar: *Analyzing the Trump Administration's One Big Beautiful Bill Act* - [Register here](#)

8.5.2025 - Webinar: *Mastering AI Adoption* - [Register here](#)

8.12.2025 - Webinar: *ACEC Life/Health Trust Informational Session* (no PDH will be awarded) - [Register here](#)

8.14.2025 - *County Engineers Regional Luncheon* - [Save the Date](#)

9.3.2025 - *IDOT Regional Luncheon* - [Save the Date](#)

9.10.2025 - Virtual Training: *IDOT Earthwork Webinar* - [Register here](#)

9.11.2025 - 9.12.2025 - *A/E/C Project Management Bootcamp* - [Register here](#)

11.18.2025 - 11.19.2025 - *ACEC IL Fall Conference* - [Save the Date](#)

12.9.2025 - *IDOT Phase 1 Seminar* - [Save the Date](#)

2.18.2026 - *ACEC IL 2026 EEA Gala* - [Save the Date](#)

6.16.2026 - *ACEC IL Spring Board Meeting & Luncheon* - [Save the Date](#)

2025 Salary, Benefits & Business Practices Survey Results - [Register here](#)
(PDF of results will be emailed to those who complete the registration)



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

High Street Consulting Group LLC www.highstreetconsulting.com

High Street is a small business dedicated to providing professional consulting services to government transportation agencies.

AtkinsRealis USA Inc.

www.atkinsrealis.com

We are a world-class engineering services and nuclear organization. We connect people, data and technology to transform the world's infrastructure and energy systems. Together, with our industry partners and clients, and our global team of consultants, designers, engineers and project managers, we can change the world.

Bautch Arias Engineering www.bautch-arias.com

A premier engineering consultancy specializing in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) planning, design, and integrating complex infrastructure projects with a proven track record of delivering top-tier solutions for municipalities and government agencies

Montel Technologies, LLC www.monteltech.com Founded in 2002, Montel Technologies, LLC is a leading provider of custom-engineered IT and physical security solutions that leverages digital technologies to protect everything from our nation's critical infrastructure to business assets. Montel specializes in the protection of people, premises and assets through entrance security, intrusion detection, radio communications, video surveillance and analytics to improve security. With expertise and strategic partnerships, Montel reviews, designs, implements and manages critical security solutions across the country.

Foundation Mechanics, LLC www.foundationmech.com

General contractor and construction manager specializing in the heavy civil, environment, public spaces, and intelligent transportation systems markets.

TREKK Design Group, LLC www.trekklc.com

TREKK Design Group is a woman-owned civil engineering firm, offering transportation, traffic, stormwater, water, wastewater, civil, and structural engineering:



SUBMIT UPDATES & ARTICLES:

Please submit firm update & news articles by the 15th of each month to:
bethany@acecil.org Articles and updates will be included in the membership newsletter,

posted on our website, and shared through our social media feeds.



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