

April 8, 2024

Honorable Senator Lisa Murkowski

Sent via email to: [Angela.Ramponi@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:Angela.Ramponi@murkowski.senate.gov)

Dear Senator Murkowski,

On behalf of the City of Soldotna, I am writing to express opposition to certain aspects of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA), while expressing support for the concept behind the Act. As a municipality invested in development of our city's infrastructure, we believe it is crucial to strike a balance between supporting domestic industries and ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of infrastructure projects.

The intention behind the BABA, as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, to prioritize domestic content procurement for infrastructure projects is commendable. Strengthening domestic manufacturing and promoting job growth within the United States is undoubtedly a worthy goal that aligns with the interests of our nation. Encouraging the use of American-made materials can stimulate economic activity, enhance national security, and foster a sense of pride in our capabilities as a nation.

However, while we support the underlying concept, we are concerned about the potential consequences and limitations imposed by the rigid application of the BABA. Mandating all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in covered infrastructure projects be produced exclusively in the United States inadvertently leads to inefficiencies, increased costs, and delays in project completion.

It is essential to recognize that in certain cases, imported materials may offer greater quality, cost-effectiveness, or specialized features not readily available domestically. Additionally, the materials necessary to complete vital infrastructure projects may not be available from domestic suppliers in a timely manner, creating delays in project timelines, that prove especially challenging when grant funding is involved. We also believe that the compliance burden is not equitable across America; BABA adds to the already significant construction challenges in Alaska. Imposing stringent domestic content requirements without flexibility could limit competition, stifle innovation, and hinder the ability of project managers to optimize resources and achieve the best possible outcomes for taxpayers.

We urge policymakers to consider refining implementation of the BABA to strike a balance between promoting domestic production and maintaining the flexibility necessary to ensure the success of infrastructure projects. This could involve:

1. Implementing a phased approach to gradually increase domestic content requirements while allowing for transition periods and exemptions for specialized materials.

2. Broader use of waivers or exceptions in cases where domestically sourced materials are not available, or where using imported materials results in significant cost savings or technical advantages.
3. Providing support for domestic manufacturers to enhance their competitiveness and capacity to meet the demand for American-made materials, in doing so, reducing reliance on imported products over time.
4. Encouraging collaboration between government agencies, industry stakeholders, and research institutions to identify opportunities for innovation and technological advancements that could enhance the competitiveness of domestic manufacturing.

By adopting a more nuanced and flexible approach, we can uphold the spirit of the Build America, Buy America Act while mitigating potential drawbacks and ensuring our infrastructure investments yield the greatest possible benefits for our nation.

Sincerely,



Janette Bower  
City Manager