The challenges facing our city are immense, and they will not be remedied with simple solutions or quick fixes. Nor can they be addressed by one community alone, which is why we are visiting our nation's capital.

A lot of issues are on the table for discussion--chief among them is the need to invest in an infrastructure that will keep our economy moving in the 21st century.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has already proposed launching the largest infrastructure bond measure in state history--$116 billion for transportation, housing, education and levees--with the rallying cry, “I say, build it!” We responded in L.A. by supporting his call and, although the final product was less than proposed, the legislature agreed to put the measure before voters in November.

We must do what we can to pass bonds like these that strive to help the state's deteriorating infrastructure. As I said last week, we must implement them by using all of the tools available to make it cost effective and on time.

It's not just transporting people that we need to be concerned about. Goods movement is a high priority as well. It has far-reaching effects on the lives of all Americans. Not only does it shape our markets, it impacts the air we breathe, the jobs we create, and the economic climate we foster.

The economic cost of delays and logistical uncertainties in transporting goods is a major problem in our economy, as congestion threatens to overwhelm the system. Our transportation system is receiving the greatest pressure from the massive inflow of imported goods. Gateway cities, such as L.A., face challenges--from homeland security and goods movement to public health and the environment.

American retailers and manufacturers depend on the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach for 43 percent of all imported goods to the U.S. It's an entry point for over $230 billion in products that reaches every state, which translates into retail jobs, markups and sales taxes that add value to local economies.

To carry this load, there are ships of increasing size and number, arriving at our docks every day. The biggest container vessels, which are larger than an aircraft carrier, can now carry up to 1.2 million 29-inch color televisions or 50 million mobile phones.

The issue we face is daunting. We have no coherent national policy on the need to invest in an infrastructure that will keep our economy competitive access to world markets will be in place. But we need help.

We're asking Congress for aport security bill and the U.S. Department of Transportation needs to adopt a national freight policy and provide federal leadership for the massive gateway and corridor construction projects. And leaders nationwide must recognize that projects built in L.A. are of national significance to keeping our economy growing and must be willing to share the financial burden of these projects.

A unified country needs a cohesive and flowing transportation system. We are ready to put our future on the line to raise our share of the cost--but this is a future that belongs to the whole country, and we can only achieve it together.

And that's The Business Perspective.