

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE MEMBER DAY

(119-20)

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MAY 14, 2025

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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure



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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Chairman

Jack Ruddy, Staff Director

Rick Larsen
Ranking Member

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

MAY 9, 2025

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
FROM: Staff, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
RE: Full Committee Hearing on *“Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day”*

I. PURPOSE

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will meet on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. ET in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building to receive testimony related to the *“Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day.”* Pursuant to section 3(r) of House Resolution 5 and Committee Rule 3(f), the purpose of this hearing is to provide Members of Congress an opportunity to testify before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on their policy priorities within the Committee’s jurisdiction.

II. BACKGROUND

The Member Day hearing is an opportunity for all Members of the House of Representatives to actively engage in the Committee’s work on all issues within the Committee’s jurisdiction. This is a formal opportunity for all Members to highlight their priorities as the Committee develops the next Surface Transportation Reauthorization, pipeline safety legislation, Coast Guard Reauthorization, water infrastructure legislation, and other important legislation affecting our Nation’s infrastructure.

III. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The Committee has broad jurisdiction over all modes of transportation and numerous types of infrastructure programs and funding, which is overseen by six subcommittees.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION:

The Subcommittee on Aviation has jurisdiction over all aspects of civil aviation, including safety, infrastructure, labor, economic regulation, and international issues. Within this scope of responsibilities, the Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), a modal administration within the United States Department of Transportation (DOT). This jurisdiction covers all programs within the FAA, as well as aviation programs of the DOT with respect to economic regulation of air carriers and passenger airline service. In addition, the Subcommittee has jurisdiction over commercial space transportation, the National Mediation Board (NMB), and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION:

The Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation has jurisdiction over the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard), including its duties, organization, functions, and powers. Within the Committee's broader maritime transportation jurisdiction, the Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the regulation of vessels and merchant seafarers; domestic laws and international conventions related to the safe operation of vessels and safety of life at sea; and the regulation of ocean shipping, domestic cabotage requirements (pursuant to the Jones Act), cargo preference, and the merchant marine, except as it relates to National defense.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management is responsible for the authorization and oversight of Federal real estate programs, including construction, repair, alteration, maintenance, and enhancement of such real property; the authorization and oversight of programs promoting economic development in communities suffering economic distress; the authorization and oversight of programs addressing the full cycle of Federal management of emergencies and disasters; and a variety of measures affecting homeland security, including building security provided by the Federal Protective Service (FPS).

The real estate activities of the Subcommittee's jurisdiction include: improving grounds of the United States, generally, and measures relating to the Public Buildings Service (PBS) of the General Services Administration (GSA), including the planning, site and design, construction, acquisition, and renovation of public buildings, courthouses, and border facilities, and the leasing of space for Federal employees; the buildings, physical plant, and infrastructure of the Capitol Complex and use of the Capitol Grounds; the facilities of the White House complex; the facilities of the Smithsonian Institution, including all new and proposed facilities; facilities of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation; Judiciary Centers; the naming of Federal buildings and courthouses; and the sale or redevelopment of Federal real property, including those identified by the Public Buildings Reform Board pursuant to the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act of 2016. The Subcommittee also oversees recent reforms to GSA operations enacted in the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA 2024) (Pub. L. No. 118-272), which included provisions to improve transparency and reduce waste in Federal real estate management.

The economic development activities of the Subcommittee include jurisdiction over the Economic Development Administration (EDA) within the Department of Commerce, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Denali Commission, the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, the Southwest Border Regional Commission, the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission, the Southern New England Regional Commission, the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission and the Great Lakes Regional Commission.

The Subcommittee's jurisdiction of Federal management of emergencies and disasters includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), oversight and activities relating to disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, as well as programs relating to first responders. The jurisdiction also includes the President's authority to declare disasters and National emergencies.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT:

The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit is responsible for the development of Federal surface transportation policy and the authorization of programs for the construction and improvement of highway and transit facilities, highway and transit safety, commercial motor vehicle and driver safety, transportation research and innovation programs, and non-motorized transportation infrastructure and safety. Related to these responsibilities, the Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the following modal administrations and offices within the DOT:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA);
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA);
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA);
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) (partial); and
- Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST), including, but not limited to, the National Surface Transportation and Innovative Finance Bureau and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROADS, PIPELINES, AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

The Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials exercises jurisdiction over the programs and activities of two DOT modal administrations: the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee includes all Federal laws and programs regulating railroad transportation, including railroad safety, rail infrastructure programs, economic regulation, railroad labor laws, and the non-revenue aspects of the Federal railroad retirement and railroad unemployment systems. The Subcommittee's jurisdiction also includes all Federal laws and programs regulating the safety of gas and liquid pipelines and the safety of transporting material and freight that has been classified as hazardous, regardless of the mode of transportation. Agencies and other establishments outside the DOT whose rail-related activities fall within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction include:

- Surface Transportation Board (STB);
- Amtrak;
- Amtrak Inspector General;
- Northeast Corridor Commission (NEC Commission);
- State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC);
- Railroad Retirement Board (RRB);
- Railroad Retirement Board Inspector General (RRB IG);
- National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT); and
- National Mediation Board (NMB).

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:

The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment consists generally of matters relating to water resources development, conservation and management, water pollution control and water infrastructure, and hazardous waste cleanup. Issues under the Subcommittee include:

- Water resources programs (projects and regulations)—United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps);
- Clean Water Act (CWA), water infrastructure and watershed protection programs—Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- CWA, regulatory authorities—EPA and Corps;
- Superfund and Brownfields revitalization—EPA;
- Ocean dumping—EPA and Corps;
- Oil pollution—EPA and Coast Guard;
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA);
- Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation—DOT;
- National Resources Conservation Service's Small Watershed Program—United States Department of Agriculture (USDA);
- Deepwater ports—EPA, Coast Guard, and Corps;
- Invasive/aquatic nuisance species/harmful algal blooms—EPA, Coast Guard, Corps, and other agencies;
- Coastal pollution and coastal zone management—EPA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA);
- Natural resource damages—NOAA, Department of the Interior (DOI), and other agencies;
- Groundwater protection—primarily EPA and Corps;
- Water resources policy—multiple agencies;
- Toxic substances and public health—Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR); and
- Boundary water issues between the United States and Mexico—the International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC) at the Department of State.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEMBER DAY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
WASHINGTON, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Sam Graves (Chairman of the committee) presiding.

Mr. GRAVES. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will now come to order.

I would ask unanimous consent that the chairman be authorized to declare a recess at any time during today's hearing.

And without objection, that is so ordered.

As a reminder, if Members wish to insert a document into the record, please also email it to DocumentsTI@mail.house.gov.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. SAM GRAVES OF MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. GRAVES. Today, I look forward to hearing from Members sharing their transportation and infrastructure priorities for the 119th Congress.

The T&I Committee has a very busy agenda this session, and looking ahead, we have multiple legislative priorities that the committee has to reauthorize. A top priority is reauthorization of the Nation's surface transportation programs.

And as we plan for a new reauthorization bill, we are going through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act carefully and looking at what works, and simply, what doesn't work. A priority of mine is to return the surface transportation reauthorization back to a traditional infrastructure bill that focuses on roads, bridges, and movement of freight.

The portal for Members' offices to submit priorities to a surface transportation reauthorization bill went live on Monday and will be open until May 30th. I look forward to working with everyone on this must-pass bill.

In addition to the surface transportation bill, we are going to be working on pipeline safety reauthorization and the water infrastructure bills. Throughout our busy schedule, we are going to continue to prioritize implementation of the 5-year Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization that was signed into law just last year on a very bipartisan basis.

As we advance our legislative agenda, it is important for both myself and the ranking member that we gather input from all the Members of Congress. And again, thank you for being here today, and thank you for testifying on the transportation and infrastructure needs of your district.

[Mr. Graves' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Sam Graves of Missouri, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Today, I look forward to hearing from Members sharing their transportation and infrastructure priorities for the 119th Congress.

The T&I Committee has a busy agenda for this session. Looking ahead, we have multiple legislative priorities that the Committee must reauthorize. A top priority is the reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation programs.

As we plan for a new reauthorization bill, we are going through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act carefully and looking at what works and what doesn't work. A priority of mine will be to return the surface transportation reauthorization back to a traditional infrastructure bill that focuses on roads, bridges, and the movement of freight.

The portal for Member offices to submit priorities to a surface transportation reauthorization bill went live on Monday and will be open until May 30th. I look forward to working with you all on this must-pass bill.

In addition to the surface transportation bill, we will also work on pipeline safety reauthorization and water infrastructure bills.

Throughout our busy schedule, we will continue to prioritize implementation of the five-year Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization that was signed into law last year on a bipartisan basis.

As we advance our legislative agenda, it is important to both myself and the Ranking Member that we gather input from all Members of Congress. Again, thank you all for being here today to testify on the transportation and infrastructure needs in your districts.

Mr. GRAVES. I now recognize Rick for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICK LARSEN OF WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to our committee's Member Day hearing, everyone. It is an opportunity for our House colleagues to testify before the committee about transportation and infrastructure priorities that are the most pressing for our constituents.

Twenty-eight Members have signed up to speak before the committee today. This robust participation from Members on both sides of the aisle as witnesses demonstrates, as the chair and I have said multiple times, the issues before this committee are not about which team you are on; they are about solving problems for the people in your district, solving the transportation and infrastructure challenges that they face, and creating opportunities—economic opportunities—for people we represent.

The enthusiasm of Members seeking to testify today is not surprising. Thanks to the work of this committee, we are seeing real and sustained investments in our Nation's roads, bridges, rail, airports, and water infrastructure. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is delivering results for communities across the country, and it is essential that this committee continue to build on its success. The

testimony of our colleagues that they deliver today will no doubt help us in that effort.

The investments we authorize and oversee in this committee promote a safer, a cleaner, a greener, more accessible transportation network; create jobs and opportunity for everyone; enhance our global economic competitiveness; build capacity in our communities; restore and protect the environment; and increase the safety of transportation in the United States.

Today's hearing will help inform our upcoming surface transportation reauthorization legislation, which is vital to maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system. This bill offers us an opportunity to enhance safety; improve our roads, bridges, transit, and rail networks; and invest in our communities to ensure America's economic competitiveness. I am confident the ideas we hear today will help us accomplish these objectives.

I want to thank the chair, as well, for his commitment to working in a bipartisan manner to see this legislation, as well as Coast Guard authorization, pipeline safety, water resources legislation, and, most recently, a FEMA reform bill discussion draft that we released last week, and working to get all these things over the finish line in this Congress.

Including a wide range of perspectives is essential to ensuring the work of this committee meets the needs of the people from across the country. Making sure Members can directly advocate for their districts is an important part of this. I want to thank the Members who have made time to come before the committee today, and I'm eager to hear your testimony.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will yield back.

[Mr. Larsen of Washington's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rick Larsen of Washington, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Welcome to the Committee's Member Day hearing, which is an opportunity for our House colleagues to testify before the Committee about the transportation and infrastructure priorities that are most pressing for their constituents. Twenty-eight members have signed up to speak before the Committee today.

The robust participation from Members on both sides of the aisle as witnesses demonstrates—as the Chairman and I have said multiple times—that the issues before this Committee are not about which team you are on. They're about solving problems for the people in your district, solving the transportation and infrastructure challenges they face and creating economic opportunities for the people we represent.

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- Promote a safer, cleaner, greener, and more accessible transportation network;
- Create jobs and opportunities for everyone;
- Enhance our global economic competitiveness;
- Build capacity in our communities;
- Restore and protect our environment; and
- Increase the safety of transportation systems in the U.S.

Today's hearing will help inform our upcoming surface transportation reauthorization legislation, which is vital to maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system.

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Thank you, Chairman Graves, for your commitment to working in a bipartisan manner to see this legislation, as well as Coast Guard authorization, pipeline safety, water resources legislation and, most recently, a FEMA reform bill discussion draft that we released last week, and working to get all those things over the finish line this Congress.

Including a wide range of perspectives is essential to ensuring the work of this Committee meets the needs of people from across the country.

Making sure Members can directly advocate for their districts is an important part of this process.

Thank you to all the Members who have made time to come before the Committee today. I am eager to hear your testimony.

Mr. GRAVES. For today's hearing, off-committee Members are going to be testifying. And I would like to take a moment—well, I don't have to explain it to you all. You understand the lighting system and how it works.

With that, I would ask unanimous consent that the witnesses' full statements be included in the record.

And without objection, that is so ordered.

As your written testimony has been made a part of the record, the committee asks that you limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes. And given the number of Members that are going to be appearing before the committee today, out of consideration for our colleagues' time, I would ask unanimous consent that members of the committee be given 2 minutes to question each Member following their statements.

Without objection, that is so ordered.

And with that, we will start with Representative Frost; 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MAXWELL FROST, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for the opportunity to address the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee this morning.

Central Florida is one of the Nation's fastest growing regions. Like similar communities, our streets and highways are notoriously congested. Government, community, and business leaders there all agree that we must attack this problem through better transit.

Good public transportation saves everybody money, whether they use it or not. And with better transit access, even drivers will save thousands of dollars a year. Transit also saves everyone time after work and between errands, as well; time that can be dedicated to friends, family, and not being stuck in traffic, which is a normal experience of being someone from Orlando, Florida.

When it comes to making transportation work for their residents, communities large and small face a major obstacle: the cost of new transit buses is shockingly high. They can easily reach over \$1 million each.

Industry stakeholders are aware of several contributing factors, and we have pulled together a lot of people on this back at home.

We have seen the amount of customization, the decline in the number of manufacturers severely dropped for buses, supply chain issues, and the low number of yearly orders. To develop consensus around a legislative solution to this problem, further work needs to be done to confirm the key drivers of costs and examine how the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Government can continue to help bring down prices.

I am going to be introducing a bill called the Transit Bus Affordability Act, which has been developed with input from the GAO, industry stakeholders, and policy experts. The legislation instructs GAO to investigate which factors are driving up the cost of transit buses, what steps the FTA, transit agencies, and stakeholders have taken to reduce costs, and any additional authorities that the FTA or transit agencies may need to help minimize costs. This bill would not be a burden on the budget, and its findings could help save our State and local governments millions of dollars as they pursue and update their public transportation.

As the committee works on constructing a surface transportation reauthorization bill, I also encourage the committee to incorporate this legislative study in the bigger package so we can take steps towards saving taxpayer money and helping our communities travel more easily and affordably throughout the communities.

Additionally, I hope the committee will consider and pass my bipartisan legislation, the Safe Air on Airplanes Act. It builds on action you all took in last year's FAA reauthorization to tackle fume events on commercial airplanes. This issue was brought to my attention by a constituent who suffers from major health issues after several fume events while working as a flight attendant.

The root cause of these fume events is part of commercial airplanes' designs, a system called the bleed air system. Except for the Boeing 787, all commercial jet aircraft take or bleed air through the engine compressors and supply it to the cabin and the flight deck. The compressors are lubricated with oil, and they can also ingest external contaminants like hydraulic fluid. New advances in aircraft design and technology means that we no longer need these systems.

The bipartisan Safe Air on Airplanes Act will ensure a future where pilots, cabin crew, and airline passengers will not have to fear fume events by ending the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in new commercial aircraft design, requiring effective filters on bleed air systems within 7 years, and phasing out the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in existing commercial aircraft designs for the coming decades.

Another piece of bipartisan legislation I ask the committee to consider is the Energy Storage for Resilient Homes Act. This piece of legislation allows the existing Federal Emergency Management Agency resources to be used for the installation of home energy storage in single-family homes. When a severe storm hits, the loss of electricity can mean the loss of life. In fact, most of the time many of the people who die because of hurricanes don't die during the hurricanes, they die the days after the hurricanes because their power has gone out. And unfortunately, much like Hurricane Ian, 100 percent of the deaths were people over the age of 65, many of whom died because their machines turned off that were helping to

keep them alive after the storm. This is something I think we should look at, and the Energy Storage for Resilient Homes Act will help with that.

Finally, I request that the committee revise the inappropriately unequal funding split that we see at the Highway Trust Fund that we have seen for decades, presently 80 percent for highways, 20 percent for transit. Well-funded public transit makes everyone's commute cheaper and easier, and we want to make sure that we have a well-funded public transit system throughout the country.

Last thing is in my district. Government and community and business leaders all alike are excited about central Florida's Sunshine Corridor. It is a project which will significantly ease the commute of over 100,000 workers, while making our largest attractions directly accessible by rail to tens of millions of visitors who choose Orlando as their vacation, starting at the airport. We hope that not just the committee, but the Federal Government will help central Florida as we expand Brightline, already existing from Miami to the Orlando airport, through Orlando all the way to Tampa, which will dramatically change and transform our region and make us even more competitive in being able to host large-scale events, as we are the largest tourist destination in the country.

I look forward to working with the committee to improve transportation for all of our constituents, and I yield back.

[Mr. Frost's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Maxwell Frost, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for the opportunity to address the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

My Central Florida is one of the nation's fastest growing regions. Like similar communities, our streets and highways are notoriously congested. Government, community, and business leaders there all agree that we must attack this problem through better transit.

Good public transportation saves everyone money, whether they use it or not. With better transit access, drivers save thousands of dollars a year. Transit means less congestion, less gas burnt off while idling in traffic, and less wear and tear on cars. Transit also saves everyone time after work and between errands as well: time that can be dedicated to friends and family, not stuck in traffic.

When it comes to making transportation work for their residents, communities large and small face a major obstacle in the shockingly high price tag of transit buses. These can easily cost over a million dollars each.

Industry stakeholders are aware of several contributing factors, like the amount of customization, the decline in the number of manufacturers, supply chain issues, and the low number of yearly orders. To develop consensus around legislative solutions to this problem, further work needs to be done to confirm the key drivers and how the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the federal government can help bring down prices.

I will be introducing the Transit Bus Affordability Act, which has been developed with input from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), industry stakeholders, and policy experts. The legislation instructs the GAO to investigate which factors are driving up the cost of transit buses, what steps the FTA, transit agencies and stakeholders have taken to reduce costs, and any additional authorities that the FTA or transit agencies may need to help minimize costs.

This bill would not be a burden on the budget and its findings could save our state and local governments millions of dollars as they pursue better and updated public transportation. As the committee works on constructing a surface transportation reauthorization bill, I encourage you to incorporate this legislative study so we can take steps toward saving taxpayer money and helping our communities travel more easily and affordably.

Additionally, I hope the committee will consider and pass my bipartisan Safe Air on Airplanes Act, which would build on actions this committee took in last year's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization to tackle fume events on commercial airplanes. This issue was brought to my attention by a constituent who suffered major health issues from fume events while working as a flight attendant.

The Safe Air on Airplanes Act will ensure a future where pilots, cabin crew, and airline passengers will not have to fear fume events by ending the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in new commercial aircraft design, requiring filters on bleed air systems to effectively keep oil particulates out of flight deck and cabin air within seven years, and phasing out the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in existing commercial aircraft designs in the coming decades.

A fume event occurs when pilots, crew, or passengers inhale engine oil or hydraulic fluid present in the air that is supplied to the flight deck and cabin. These particles include a long list of toxic chemicals, and the adverse health effects can include dizziness and vomiting, difficulty breathing, irregular heart rate, and memory loss. Fume events have ended the careers of exposed pilots and flight attendants. An average of five fume events are reported to the FAA each day.

The root cause of fume events is a part of commercial airplane designs called a bleed air system. Except for the Boeing 787, all aircraft take (or "bleed") air through the engine compressors and supply it to the cabin and flight deck. The compressors are lubricated with oil and can also ingest external contaminants like hydraulic fluid. New advances in aircraft design and technologies mean that we no longer need these systems.

Another piece of bipartisan legislation I ask the committee to consider is the Energy Storage for Resilient Homes Act. This bill allows existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) resources to be used for the installation of home energy storage in single family homes. When severe weather hits, loss of electricity can mean loss of life, especially for seniors and people with disabilities. Home energy storage can keep that vital electricity running. While current disaster mitigation policy is focused on the city and state level, this bill will allow individuals and households to directly protect their homes and themselves.

Disaster mitigation is just one of FEMA's many important roles. I ask this committee to resist supporting any proposals to abolish it. Central Floridians are currently gearing up for another Hurricane Season, where tens of thousands of our community members may once again need this help. FEMA has thousands of experts in disaster response and recovery, rebuilding infrastructure, and grants management and maintains stockpiles of emergency supplies and equipment ready to be deployed. If FEMA is abolished, states will compete for scarce resources and qualified, experienced personnel. Americans deserve better than "good luck with that" when it comes to surviving severe weather.

Finally, I request that the committee revises the inappropriately unequal funding split for the Highway Trust Fund, which is presently 80 percent for highways and 20 percent for transit. Well-funded public transportation makes everyone's commute easier. Less traffic means that we will all be breathing cleaner air on those trips while there will also be less pollutants in our soil and water.

I look forward to working with the committee to improve transportation for our constituents, whether they are looking forward to the fastest commute home to their family or the safest flight possible on their epic trip to Central Florida's internationally celebrated attractions.

Mr. GRAVES. Do any Members wish to be recognized for questions?

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Representative Frost, just to clarify on Brightline, is it envisioned that if it is extended from Orlando to Tampa, that that would be Brightline, or—

Mr. FROST [interrupting]. Yes.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON [continuing]. Is it—

Mr. FROST [interrupting]. Yes. So, it is really interesting. And so essentially, right now it is going to the airport and the Sunshine Corridor is—it will kind of zigzag through Orlando, some very key spots—Disney, Universal, et cetera, all those areas—and then it will continue from Tampa. But there will be a transfer station with our commuter rail, which is called SunRail, in Orlando as well.

And so this Brightline, which will go from east to west, it will go into to Tampa, will connect with our north-south commuter rail, which will be transformational for the workers all throughout the region and the entertainment industry, but also for the people who live there who will more easily be able to get from any part of the State—most parts of the State—through rail.

Mr. GRAVES. Does anyone else wish to be recognized?

Seeing no one, thank you, Mr. Frost.

Mr. FROST. Thank you.

Mr. GRAVES. We will next move to Representative LaLota, New York First.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. NICK LALOTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for holding today's hearing and for giving me the opportunity to speak about an issue that has a great deal of importance to the people I represent back home on Long Island, the Long Island Sound Program.

Back in 1985, Congress wisely created the Long Island Sound Program to take on the environmental challenges facing one of our region's most treasured and economically vital natural resources. Since then, the program has helped us clean up pollution, restore habitats, and protect the sound for future generations.

For folks on Long Island and across the sound in Connecticut, this isn't just about environmental protection; it is about our way of life. Whether you are a fisherman, a small business owner, a researcher, or just somebody who enjoys our beaches and waterways, the sound is a part of who we are. It is how a lot of people in our region make a living, and how even more build a better life for their families.

But let's be honest, the sound has had its share of problems. Decades of pollution, overdevelopment, and neglect have taken their toll. We have seen water quality suffer, marine habitats deteriorate, and dangerous hypoxia threaten fish and shellfish populations.

The good news is that the Long Island Sound Program is working. Because of Federal investments, nitrogen pollution is down more than 70 percent compared to the 1990s; hypoxic conditions have dropped nearly 60 percent; and we have restored over 2,200 acres of coastal habitat. In fiscal year 2024, we secured \$40 million, the highest funding level the program has ever seen, and we are putting that money to good use with more than 570 conservation projects underway.

We have come a long way, but we are not done. Reauthorizing this program is how we build on that progress and make sure the sound is clean, swimmable, fishable, and thriving for generations to come. I am proud to represent a district where protecting the sound is not a partisan issue, it is a local priority.

I look forward to working with all of you to reauthorize this program, and I urge my colleagues to support my legislation, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Also, very quickly, on a separate issue, as we approach reauthorization of the surface transportation bill, the Amalgamated Transit Union, or ATU, represents thousands of schoolbus drivers on Long Island, and many of the New York Transit busdrivers live in my district. These hard-working Americans put their lives at risk on a daily basis, transporting folks to school, work, and other appointments. Workforce safety and workforce development are critical issues for these great men and women, and I ask the committee to consider the priorities of the ATU as you begin drafting your surface transportation reauthorization.

Thank you, Chairman, I yield back.

[Mr. LaLota's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Nick LaLota, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for holding today's hearing and for giving me the opportunity to speak about an issue that means a great deal to the people I represent on Long Island—reauthorizing the Long Island Sound Program.

Back in 1985, Congress created the Long Island Sound Program to take on the environmental challenges facing one of our region's most treasured and economically vital natural resources.

Since then, the program has helped us clean up pollution, restore habitats, and protect the Sound for future generations.

For folks on Long Island and across the Sound in Connecticut, this isn't just about environmental protection—it's about our way of life.

Whether you're a fisherman, a small business owner, a researcher, or just someone who enjoys our beaches and waterways—the Sound is part of who we are.

It's how a lot of people in our region make a living and how even more build a better life for their families.

But let's be honest—the Sound has had its share of problems. Decades of pollution, overdevelopment, and neglect have taken their toll.

We've seen water quality suffer, marine habitats deteriorate, and dangerous hypoxia threaten fish and shellfish populations.

The good news is that the Long Island Sound Program is working. Because of federal investments, nitrogen pollution is down more than 70% compared to the 1990s, hypoxic conditions have dropped nearly 60%, and we've restored over 2,200 acres of coastal habitat.

In FY24, we secured \$40 million—the highest funding level the program has ever seen—and we're putting that money to good use with more than 570 conservation projects underway.

We've come a long way, but we're not done.

Reauthorizing this program is how we build on that progress—and make sure the Sound is clean, swimmable, fishable, and thriving for generations to come.

I'm proud to represent a district where protecting the Sound is not a partisan issue—it's a local priority.

I look forward to working with all of you to reauthorize this program, and I urge my colleagues to support my legislation, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Also, very quickly, on a separate issue as we approach reauthorization of the Surface Transportation bill.

The Amalgamated Transit Union or ATU represent thousands of school bus drivers on Long Island and many of the NY transit bus drivers live in my district.

These hard-working Americans put their lives at risk on a daily basis transporting folks to school, work, and other appointments.

Workforce safety and workforce development are critical issues for these great men and women and I ask the Committee to consider the priorities of the ATU as you begin drafting your Surface Transportation Reauthorization.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. PERRY [presiding]. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Are there any Members that have questions?

Mr. Larsen is recognized.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thanks.

Thank you, Representative LaLota, for your testimony on Long Island Sound. The Puget Sound is also one of those programs in the EPA's geographic program, and so looking at your particular bill would probably be done in a larger context of the 12 or 13 of the geographic programs that are part of that, certainly.

I am as supportive of Long Island's program as I am of Puget Sound's program, so we can work together on this.

Mr. LALOTA. Ranking Member, in 2003 and 2004, I was stationed in Bremerton, Washington. I lived in Seattle and transited the Puget Sound routinely. And I support your endeavors, too, sir.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. And we appreciate your efforts there while you were there to keep it clean.

Mr. LALOTA. I did my part, sir.

Mr. PERRY. The gentleman yields. Are there any other questions from any other Members?

Hearing none, the Chair thanks the gentleman from New York.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Goodlander.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MAGGIE GOODLANDER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ms. GOODLANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Larsen, members of this committee, for the opportunity to be here today to testify before you. My good friend and colleague, Congressman Chris Pappas, represents our State of New Hampshire very well on this committee, and I am delighted to be here today to join him in those efforts.

New Hampshire is a small State, relatively small State. My district is a pretty big one: 6,500 square miles from my hometown of Nashua all the way up to the north country, the Canadian border. We have got almost 17,000 miles of public highways and roads, almost 4,000 bridges, and it is a district that is mostly rural. So I want to thank this committee for the bipartisan efforts that you have made to support our rural communities.

Today, as I have traveled across the district, I have heard two things loud and clear from our partners at the local level, at the county level, at the regional level, and I have spent some time with our regional planning commissions.

And the two things I have heard are, number one, I hope that this committee will continue to prioritize ways to cut redtape and to streamline the processes that so many of our local communities struggle with in accessing Federal funds, which, for New Hampshire and for so many communities across our country, are the life-blood of our transportation and infrastructure system. And so I want to urge this committee to continue to develop those ideas. I think there have been some promising proposals, for example, for the development of a common application that would cut redtape and allow for communities to apply for multiple Federal infrastructure programs through a single application process, a commonsense way to cut redtape and to make Government work more effectively for the American people.

I also want to say, our communities really depend upon reliable Federal funding streams. And in New Hampshire, the \$15 million that was clawed back for electric vehicle charging stations earlier this year as part of a funding freeze has been extremely disruptive in our State, and I hope that this committee will continue to prioritize doing everything in our power to make sure that we have got reliable funding streams across the board.

I want to just point out a few priorities for New Hampshire in the upcoming—the must-pass surface transportation reauthorization bill. A number of discretionary programs have been critical to my State. That includes the BUILD program, which has been essential in the development of regionally significant projects like the Claremont Access, Restoration, Development, and Safety project, the CARDS project, in my district.

My hometown, Nashua, has been working towards a commuter rail to connect southern New Hampshire with Boston, and the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program is a key source of funding for that effort.

Flooding has also been a persistent problem in the Granite State, and the PROTECT program is an incredibly important source of funding for resiliency-focused projects.

I want to point out two other programs when it comes to transportation safety and reducing transportation-related fatalities and injuries, and that includes the Highway Safety Improvement and the Safe Streets for All programs. That is especially important for motorcycles, which have a large presence back at home.

I hope this committee will also prioritize better safety data collection including on cargo vans used by big companies like Amazon.

And I hope the committee will, in the upcoming bill, add language that will ensure those with felony sex assault convictions aren't able to get a commercial driver's license. This is, I think, a really important safeguard that addresses concerns that have been raised by the Women of Trucking Advisory Board.

I want to also point out a bipartisan bill that I hope to have the support of this committee on, the Path to Education Act, which is designed to really ensure that we fill gaps across this country that is preventing people from accessing programs like Head Start and from being able to attend our community colleges. Head Start delivers a really strong return on investment in New Hampshire, and our community colleges are the lifeblood of our communities. And this simple, commonsense, bipartisan bill would empower the Department of Transportation to act on data that has been collected by the mapping project at the National League of Cities to close gaps in transportation and really enable the kind of economic opportunity that we all want to see.

In closing, I just want to point out I hope this committee will continue to support the Northern Border Regional Commission, which has punched above its weight and been an essential driver of economic development for New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and Maine.

And finally, I just want to thank this committee for the bipartisan work that you have done on aviation safety. My district is home to one of our country's 22 air traffic control centers, the Patricia Clark Center in my hometown of Nashua. H.R. 3270, the Air

Traffic Control Workforce Development Act of 2025, has earned support across the board from this committee, and I want to thank you for your efforts on that bill and urge you to see that bill across the finish line.

But I thank you for the bipartisan work of this really important committee and look forward to working with you in the days ahead.

[Ms. Goodlander's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Maggie Goodlander, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Hampshire

Good morning, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the committee. Thank you for holding today's Member Day and for providing the opportunity to highlight transportation and infrastructure needs from New Hampshire's Second Congressional District.

I want to start by sharing my priorities related to the forthcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill. More than anything my state DOT needs reliable federal funding streams to effectively plan and execute projects. Accordingly, I urge you to include robust funding levels for federal highway formula programs for our roads and bridges, as well as transit formula programs, especially for rural areas. Given the various federal funding streams, I also lend my support to proposals for the development of a "common application" that would cut red tape and allow communities to apply for multiple federal infrastructure programs through a single application process. This would greatly reduce the administrative burden on small towns and rural communities. I would also be remiss not to mention my frustration as the New Hampshire DOT recently lost \$15 million for EV charging stations, with the Trump Administration's "funding freeze," which I am glad to see state Attorneys General fighting in court.

In terms of discretionary programs, the BUILD program has helped with the development of regionally significant projects, like the Claremont Access, Restoration, Development and Safety (CARDS) project in my district. My hometown of Nashua has been working towards commuter rail to connect southern New Hampshire with Boston. The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program is a key funding source in that effort. Flooding has also been a persistent problem in the Granite State, and the PROTECT Program has been an important funding source for resiliency-focused projects.

Regarding safety, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) also recommended a bridge in New Hampshire, the Memorial Bridge, be subject to additional review following the collapse of Baltimore's Key Bridge. I urge this committee to ensure states have the assistance and resources they need to conduct these reviews and ensure proper safeguards. I also back federal efforts to reduce the number of transportation related fatalities and injuries under the Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) and Safe Streets for All programs, especially for motorcycles which have a large presence back home. Better safety data collection—including on cargo vans used by companies like Amazon—is also needed. Additionally, I urge this committee to add language ensuring those with felony sexual assault convictions are not able to get Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDLs), a necessary safeguard that aligns with concerns raised by the Women of Trucking Advisory Board (WOTAB).

My final surface transportation priority is the PATH to Education Act, a bipartisan bill I'm working on to ensure lack of transportation doesn't prevent access to Head Start and community colleges—two vital tools for creating upward economic mobility. Head Start serves low-income families with young children and delivers a strong return on investment, while community colleges provide affordable quality education to diverse learners from veterans, to working adults, to those looking to reskill for today's economy. Yet without a car, many can't reach these programs. The Civic Mapping Project at the National League of Cities identifies where transit routes could be expanded to close these gaps. My bill would empower the Department of Transportation (DOT) to act on that data and connect more people to these opportunities. I urge you to include it in the surface transportation reauthorization.

Two other priorities for me in this committee's jurisdiction include the Northern Border Regional Commission and addressing our national shortage of air traffic controllers. The NBRC was created in 2008 as a federal-state partnership that provides vital support for infrastructure and economic development initiatives in 60 rural counties in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and Maine. The NBRC has helped

alleviate distress and restore economic opportunity to the region. The Trump Administration's FY26 budget request proposed eliminating it, but I proudly co-led a recent bipartisan, bicameral appropriations letter with Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) advocating for the program. I thank this committee for your strong bipartisan track record of support for the NBRC and urge it to continue. Just last week, along with several Members of this committee, I also helped introduce H.R. 3270, the Air Traffic Control Workforce Development Act of 2025. I urge you to move this bipartisan commonsense legislation to help recruit and retain air traffic controllers and equip our aviation workforce with the equipment and facilities they need to keep our skies safe through this committee.

Thank you again for your bipartisan leadership, consideration of these requests, and the chance to speak here today. I look forward to working with you this Congress.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. Are there questions or comments?

Hearing none, thank you, ma'am. The Chair now turns to the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Yakym.

TESTIMONY OF HON. RUDY YAKYM III, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Mr. YAKYM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To Chairman Graves, who I know is outside of here, but also to Ranking Member Larsen, it is great to be back in 2167 Rayburn again. I had the privilege of serving on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the 118th Congress, and I am proud of the work that we were able to accomplish together.

I want to present five priorities that I hope this committee will consider this Congress.

The first is ensuring that the FAA releases its overdue notice of proposed rulemaking on beyond visual line of sight operations for unmanned aerial aircraft systems as soon as possible. One of our committee's key accomplishments last Congress was the bipartisan FAA reauthorization. Unfortunately, this notice of proposed rulemaking was due September 16th of 2024. That deadline, of course, has come and gone. It is one of many missed opportunities that former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg left for the current Secretary, Sean Duffy.

This Congress, the expiration of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or IIJA, looms large. I wasn't in the House when IIJA passed, but I participated in a number of oversight hearings, and it is clear that IIJA's results did not live up to its promises. I have three priorities that I believe will make the next surface transportation bill a success.

First, streamline the grant agreement process as much as possible, and require public reports on grant agreement progress across programs to ensure and drive accountability. Secretary Buttigieg's crippling bureaucracy got in the way of putting shovels in the ground. It is no wonder Secretary Duffy was saddled with a backlog of 3,200 projects that were announced, but not executed on.

A valuable oversight tool was the Department's monthly reports on grant agreements under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, or RAISE, program. As of the last available report, November 2024, only 224 of 414 grant agreements, just over half, were executed for grants awarded in fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023. It is absolutely unacceptable for

projects to wait upwards of 3 years to get the green light from the Secretary, especially in a time of high inflation.

You might think projects highlighted in the Department's press releases got a little extra attention. They did not. Only 9 of the 23 RAISE projects, or 39 percent, highlighted in the fiscal year 2021, 2022, and 2023 press releases had an executed grant agreement as of the November 2024 progress report. Too often, Secretary Buttigieg seemed content to bask in the fanfare of the announcement, only to leave the projects stuck at the starting line.

My next IIJA priority is to dramatically scale back discretionary grants in favor of formula funding. IIJA expanded discretionary grants by 500 percent, but Indiana ranked dead last on a per capita basis in securing these grants. Apparently, the Hoosier State maybe just needed some better connections in the Department. And while some of the responsibility lies with project selection and design, the Department had a large scale, too. For example, a local entity that was passed over for a planning grant to study a grade separation at a dangerous railroad was told in a debrief by the Department of Transportation that the project might have scored higher had they included a plan for EV charging. States know where it is best to allocate infrastructure money for local needs, not bureaucrats in Washington that think railroad overpasses need EV chargers.

Speaking of which, I urge the committee to end IIJA's failed EV charging programs. The \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, or NEVI, and the \$2½ billion Charging and Fueling Infrastructure, or CFI, programs again had lofty promises. But in over 3 years, NEVI stood up only about 60 stations, and CFI only 3. Here, too, the Secretary gummed up the process through rigid regulations and burdensome DEI requirements.

But the Federal Government shouldn't be involved in constructing EV charging stations in the first place. According to the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation, there were 12,000 public charging ports added in the fourth quarter of 2024 alone. In 3 years, NEVI and CFI built approximately 300.

My final priority is to ensure agencies refocus on their core missions. The Biden administration infused its woke DEI agenda into agencies, often at the expense of their core functions. For example, the Deputy Administrator for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA, tried to brand the safety agency as a "climate agency." FEMA changed its number-one strategic goal from "build a culture of preparedness" to "instill a culture of equity as a foundation of emergency management." These pointless word games add nothing of substance; they only waste time and distract from the core missions. Our Federal agencies need to get back to the basics.

Thank you for having me testify today. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[Mr. Yakym's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rudy Yakym III, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, it's good to be in 2167 Rayburn again.

I had the honor of serving on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the 118th Congress, and I'm proud of what we were able to roll up our sleeves and get done together.

One of the key accomplishments of the Committee in the 118th Congress was the bipartisan Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization. But as a new Member, I was struck by how many stakeholders came in to talk about provisions from previous reauthorizations that the FAA still hadn't implemented. Unfortunately, I want to start by adding one to the pile.

The FAA was supposed to publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on beyond visual line of sight operations (BVLOS) for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) by September 16, 2024. However, that deadline has come and gone. Former Secretary Pete Buttigieg left current Secretary Sean Duffy with a lot of missed deadlines. *I hope that we can get a BVLOS NPRM in short order.*

One of the biggest looming issues for this Committee in the 119th Congress is the expiration of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). I wasn't in Congress when IIJA passed, but I sat through many oversight hearings, and I must reluctantly conclude that IIJA's results did not live up to its promises.

A common theme in IIJA's failures is the bureaucracy of Secretary Buttigieg's Department of Transportation getting in the way of putting shovels in the ground. I heard from many local entities that won grants about the wave of paperwork and delays they faced. For example, recipients of a 2023 Safe Streets and Roads for All grant were required to certify compliance with 75 laws and regulations, as well as 12 executive orders.¹

The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program was also illustrative of Secretary Buttigieg's crippling bureaucracy. The Department publicly tracked the progress of RAISE recipients' grant agreements, which are required before work can begin on a project.

As of the last available progress report, in November 2024, only 224 of 414 (54.1%) grant agreements were executed for grant awards across fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023. It is plainly unacceptable for projects to wait upwards of three years to get the green light from the Department, especially as they were grappling with the Biden Administration's massive inflation.

Too often, Secretary Buttigieg appears to have been content to announce grants to great fanfare, only to turn around and bury recipients under paperwork. Only 9 of the 23 (39.1%) RAISE projects highlighted in the Department's fiscal year 2021, 2022, and 2023 press releases had an executed grant agreement as of the November 2024 progress report.

Indeed, Secretary Duffy reports that Secretary Buttigieg left him a backlog of 3,200 projects that were announced but not executed upon.² As this Committee works toward a surface transportation reauthorization, *I urge you to require public reports on the progress of grant agreements across grant programs, similar to the RAISE program, to ensure accountability and to streamline the grant agreement process as much as possible.*

Another common concern I heard from stakeholders in the Hoosier state was the lack of discretionary grants. IIJA expanded discretionary grants by 500%, but Indiana ranked dead last on a per-capita basis in securing those grants. To be sure, some of the responsibility lies with project selection and design. However, Secretary Buttigieg's Department had a large role too. For example, a local entity that was not selected to receive a planning grant for a railroad grade separation was told in a debrief by Department officials that their project might have scored higher if the application had included a plan to add electric vehicle (EV) charging. States know how to spend this money on local needs. As such, *I urge this Committee to dramatically scale back discretionary grant programs in favor of formula funding in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.*

One final failure of IIJA I would like to highlight are its electric vehicle (EV) charging station programs, the \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

¹ https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2024-01/SS4A-FY23_Exhibits_2024-01-04.pdf

² <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-aproves-another-180-grants-get-america>

(NEVI) and \$2.5 billion Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) programs. In over three years, NEVI stood up only about 60 charging stations and CFI only 3.³

There were many reasons for this failure, such as overly rigid federal regulations and burdensome diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) requirements.⁴ However, there is also a fundamental question about whether the federal government needs to be involved in constructing EV charging stations in the first place. According to the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation's Q4 2024 NEVI Quarterly Update, there were 12,000 public charging ports added that quarter. NEVI and CFI together in over three years built approximately 300. The private sector seems to be handling EV charging station construction just fine. As such, *I urge this Committee to end the failed NEVI and CFI programs in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.*

Finally, I want to talk about getting back to basics. The Biden Administration was characterized by mission creep and the infusion of DEI into everything it did, often at the expense of core agency functions. For example, Tristan Brown, the Deputy Administrator for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), which is dedicated to pipeline safety, tried to "brand" the agency as a "climate agency." Another example is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which, under the Biden Administration, changed its number one goal from "Build a culture of preparedness" to "Instill equity as a foundation of emergency management." *I urge this Committee to ensure agencies re-focus on their core missions.*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I yield back.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Are there questions or comments from members of the committee?

Hearing none, I would just say to Representative Yakym I agree with you regarding many of the things—probably almost all of the things that you said, there might be something there—but specifically the ability to go beyond the line of visual sight for the UAS industry in America. We have worked long and hard at that, and it is well and long overdue. And I think that there is agreement on both sides of the aisle in that regard, and so I appreciate you bringing it to our attention once again. And I thank the gentleman.

Mr. YAKYM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair now turns to Representative Simon for her testimony.

TESTIMONY OF HON. LATEEFAH SIMON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. SIMON. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Chair, Chair Graves, and Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the committee. I am just so honored, and I believe that Ranking Member Larsen knows how honored I am to be speaking in front of this committee today.

As a Member of Congress, a new Member—again, I have long dreamed of sitting in this seat and talking about how much I love transit—I was born premature, with a visual impairment, and one of the few folks, I believe, in the United States Congress who was born with a congenital visual impairment. I am legally blind. And as a blind person, a transit-dependent person, I have relied on public transportation for all of my life. In fact, as a young mom, a teen mom going to college, taking my baby to daycare, I had to make decisions on where I lived or what time the bus or the train came to get to work, to turn in assignments, to be able to make a way out of no way for my family.

³ <https://afdc.energy.gov/stations#/analyze?tab=fuel&fuel=ELEC>

⁴ <https://freebeacon.com/biden-administration/white-house-equity-requirements-holding-back-ev-charging-station-construction-internal-docs-show/>

The time tax, when you are transit-dependent, you are not only reliant on transit agencies, you are reliant on good employees getting to those bus stops at the time that you need to get there to be able to get to work. I know this all too well.

Public transit for me was not just a convenience. It was a lifeline, an opportunity, stability, and survival. The deep, personal connection that I have had as a transit-dependent person actually led me to run for office and to win an office to be on the board of directors of Bay Area Rapid Transit, one of three elected transit boards in the Nation. Better known as BART, I helped lead BART during a very difficult time, during COVID, and I want to thank this committee for your advocacy and support.

And despite declining ridership during the COVID pandemic, BART continued to run trains for nurses and janitors and grocery clerks, the essential workers who kept our communities going. And like so many other public transportation agencies in this country, we did it during that crucial period because of the Federal partnership, because of the brave men and women who sat on this committee who understood that mobility is, in fact, not a privilege, that it is a right.

The \$69 billion that moved really from this committee all over the Nation in emergency support to support systems like Bay Area Rapid Transit led institutions to move instead of collapse. And again, so thankful to the members of T&I for leading us through that process.

But as emergency funds, they are sunsetting in 2026. Systems across the country face—and you all know this—a fiscal cliff. The situation is not just urgent, it is, in fact, existential. BART has had to heavily rely on fare revenue, which, unfortunately, has made up 70 percent of our operating budget. But now, fare revenues only cover about 25 percent of the total operating cost. This isn't about poor financial management. In fact, it is about decades—it is a national issue—decades of transit disinvestment, underinvestment, leaving us far behind our global partners, our global peers, our adversaries in building more reliant public transportation systems.

This committee has been integral in putting together IIJA, a historic downpayment on our Nation's infrastructure that we must build on now. Without new, reliable funding, BART and other transit agencies around the country are facing severe service cuts. Bay Area Rapid Transit, up to 80 percent. This means no weekend service. This means layoffs. This means devastating impacts to transit congestion and air quality.

I have got to say, for many of us who are speaking nationally about the crisis of public transportation, some of us don't have car keys. We rely, our lifeblood, on being able to access reliable and safe public transportation. The cuts now wouldn't just harm transit systems, they disproportionately would harm low-income folks, vulnerable folks, transit-dependent folks, and, of course, our elders, seniors, and people with disability. Slashing transit services now means slashing and slamming the door on these communities.

In California—I only have a few seconds left, but in California, legislation has been introduced to give voters the opportunity to continue to support public transportation in its dire phase. But the States can't do it alone. I would love to work with this committee.

Mr. Larsen, I would love to be a shadow member of this committee as a part of the Democratic Party. I will be outside working with you all as we move towards a transit-equitable Nation.

Thank you so much for having me today. I would love to take any questions.

[Ms. Simon's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Lateefah Simon, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, and members of this committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

I am honored to be here not only as a Member of Congress, but as someone whose life has been shaped by public transit.

I was born premature and born with a visual impairment. Now, I am the first congenitally blind Member of Congress.

As a congenitally blind woman, I have navigated life using the public transit systems of California's Bay Area.

As a young working mother, I would drop my daughter off, get to work at the San Francisco District Attorney's office, then hurry back to pick up my daughter and bring her back to the office while I finished work—all using public transportation.

Public transit wasn't just convenience—it was my lifeline for opportunity, stability, and survival.

That deep personal connection is why I later stepped up to serve on the Board of Directors of the Bay Area Rapid Transit, better known as BART, to help lead the system through one of the most difficult times in its history: the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite declining ridership, BART continued to run trains for nurses, janitors, grocery clerks—the essential workers who kept our communities afloat.

And like so many other public transit agencies, we did it with Federal partnership. The \$69 billion in emergency support from the Federal government saved systems like BART from collapse.

But as emergency funds sunset in 2026, transit systems across the country face a *fiscal cliff*. The situation is not just urgent—it is *existential*.

Without new, reliable funding, BART is facing service cuts of up to 80 percent. That means no weekend service, mass layoffs, and devastating impacts to traffic congestion and air quality.

These cuts wouldn't just harm transit systems. They would disproportionately harm the most vulnerable, transit-dependent communities.

Seniors, people with disabilities, working parents, small business owners, and low-income families all depend on accessible public transit.

Slashing transit service means slamming the door on these communities and so many others.

That is why I support efforts at *every* level to stabilize transit funding.

In California, legislation has been introduced to give voters the opportunity to support regional transit funding through a sales tax measure. But states cannot do this alone.

Staffing, fuel, and maintenance are fundamental to any productive transit system. Yet, federal law severely limits how agencies can use Highway Trust Fund dollars to cover those essential operating costs.

I stand ready to work with the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on effective budgetary solutions to ensure the needs of our twenty-first century transit systems are not crippled by a twentieth century funding structure.

In the same spirit of modernization, during my time at BART, I worked to ensure the system was not only accessible, but safe and just.

I championed the creation of the first-in-the-nation unarmed *Transit Ambassador* program.

These Ambassadors are trained professionals focused on de-escalation, mental health awareness, and social service connections.

The results speak for themselves: crime on BART dropped 17% last year and violent crime dropped 23% even as ridership climbed by 2.6 million trips.

Last month, I visited and rode from the 19th Street to the Fruitvale BART station to see the Transit Ambassador and other BART improvements at work.

I spoke with riders who feel safer because they see someone who can help, not just arrest.

Transit Ambassadors are a cost-effective way to protect operators, deter violence, and build public confidence, without over-policing.

That's why I will be introducing legislation that would expand these programs nationwide.

I urge this committee to seriously consider how such policies can reshape public safety across our transit systems.

Finally, I want to bring up another important issue: housing.

Affordable housing and public transit are deeply interconnected.

For working families, living near transit isn't a luxury. It means access to jobs, schools, healthcare, and opportunity.

When we put homes near transit, we can reduce emissions and connect families and communities to the future that they deserve.

I look forward to collaborating with this Committee to drive forward efforts that promote transit-oriented affordable housing and foster sustainable, efficient communities.

I'll end with this: mobility is a human right. It's how we get to work, to school, to doctors' appointments, and to each other.

I was sent to Congress by my constituents to join the fight for working families. That fight starts with making sure they can get where they need to go safely, affordably, and reliably.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. Are there comments or questions from members of the committee?

Mr. Larsen, the ranking member, is recognized.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Representative Simon. I don't think the committee rules allow for shadow Members, but—

Ms. SIMON [interrupting]. That was a joke, sir.

[Laughter.]

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON [continuing]. But I get your point.

So yes, let's stay in touch, especially on transit. I know how important it is for you.

Ms. SIMON. Absolutely, absolutely. Shadow meaning that I support this committee—

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON [interrupting]. I got it, I got it.

Ms. SIMON [continuing]. And I support the work. Thank you very much.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Sure.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Any further questions or comments?

Hearing none, seeing none, thank you, Representative Simon. The Chair now recognizes Representative Min.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DAVE MIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. MIN. Thank you, Chair Perry, Ranking Member Larsen. I appreciate the opportunity to share my transportation priorities with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

I represent the heart of Orange County, coastal Orange County, just south of Los Angeles. And as we all know, the Olympics are coming to L.A. in 2028. We are going to have some pretty important infrastructure needs. And for those of you who have come down to our district, it is a beautiful place. Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, Huntington Beach, some of the nicest beaches in the country.

You know that our populations are expanding rapidly. And right now many people in my district are concerned that Orange County is headed down the same pathway as Los Angeles, that we are going to experience gridlock and traffic. And so T&I is very, very important for our district at this pivotal moment in time, where we have the opportunity to maybe avoid some of the challenges that L.A., our neighbor to the north, has faced. So I have got three priorities for you today.

The first is for local suballocation for surface transportation block grants. And this is one of my top priorities for the Orange County Transportation Authority for transportation users throughout my district, and that is restoring the ability to suballocate Federal funding to counties.

In California, Federal funding for our transportation systems such as the surface transportation block grants have historically gone to metropolitan planning organizations, and then have been distributed to county entities based on population. This framework has allowed transportation projects to move forward more efficiently, especially in southern California, which has the largest metropolitan planning organization in the country.

I want to urge the committee to make clear that local suballocation is explicitly allowed, and it is critical to the timely implementation of transportation projects. Recent Federal guidance has been less than clear on the eligibility of funds for suballocation, adding unnecessary burden for southern California and reducing the responsiveness of taxpayer dollars to our region's transportation needs.

My second priority is coastal resilience for intercity rail, the L-O-S-S-A-N, or LOSSAN. Extreme weather events driven by changing climate have placed an enormous strain on our transportation systems, creating growing service delays and costs necessary to modernize our aging infrastructure. In Orange County, we have seen this firsthand with the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo rail corridor—or LOSSAN, as it is known—that runs through the heart of my district. This is the second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor in the country, with millions of passengers relying on this annually to get to their jobs, to see beaches, to visit their families, for tourism, and the like.

However, coastal erosion is threatening this key economic corridor. Unstable bluffs, hillsides, and other hazards brought on by coastal erosion are beginning to cause significant disruptions to transportation services in the region. You probably heard about the need to reroute the Amtrak corridor through the heart of my district, Orange County to San Diego, and that has led to a number of delays, including five shutdowns in Orange County over the past 5 years.

Federal support for infrastructure stabilization and resiliency is urgently needed at this time to address vulnerabilities from extreme weather events; new climate patterns to ensure that our intercity rail corridors like LOSSAN can continue to support passenger service, goods movement, and regional connectivity; very, very important priorities for the economy.

Finally, my last priority is for zero-emission vehicles. Air pollution from the transportation sector is a serious public health con-

cern in Orange County. It was not that long ago that in southern California, we regularly saw some of the worst smog and air pollution in the world. We were able to move that around with some changes to our local and Federal policies. But even with the existing lower emission standards, this pollution has cost our State and country billions of dollars annually in healthcare costs and lost productivity.

We need to take advantage of new technologies that are coming to market to diversify our transportation options, reduce carbon emissions and fuel costs, and create healthier communities, all while creating jobs and spurring innovation. Unfortunately, we have seen right now so far in the Trump administration a hostility to these efforts with a number of targeted programs like the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program which are helping to build out the infrastructure necessary to support zero-emission vehicles.

I would also point out that this is an important spur for manufacturing. There are many companies that have invested heavily in the United States and manufacturing, based on some of these types of incentives and programs. Keeping those in place will help to ensure that we keep those thousands of jobs, whether it's companies in Georgia or South Carolina or in California.

As you develop your surface transportation program, I would urge you to consider the importance of zero-emission vehicles for averting the most devastating consequences of the climate crisis, leaving future generations with a livable world.

I would urge you to continue funding critical programs, including those supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act that are helping to decarbonize transportation across the country. In places like California, zero-emissions vehicles, electric vehicles make sense. If you visit, you notice most people are now driving—most of the new car sales are, in fact, electric vehicles. We need that infrastructure support to keep building that out.

So thank you for your time and for your consideration of my priorities. I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this committee and appreciate your hard work.

I yield back.

[Mr. Min's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Dave Min, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to share my transportation priorities with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

As the Committee begins developing a multi-year reauthorization package for surface transportation programs, I want to highlight the importance of federal transportation investments for my constituents throughout Orange County.

One of the top priorities for the Orange County Transportation Authority—and for transportation users throughout my district—is restoring the ability to sub-allocate federal funding to counties. In California, federal funding for our transportation system, such as the Surface Transportation Block Grants, have historically gone to Metropolitan Planning Organizations and then distributed to county entities based on population. This framework has allowed transportation projects to move forward more efficiently, especially in Southern California, which has the largest metropolitan planning organization in the country.

I urge the Committee to make clear that local sub-allocation is explicitly allowed and critical to the timely implementation of transportation projects. Recent federal guidance has been less clear on the eligibility of funds for sub-allocation, adding unnecessary burden for Southern California and reducing the responsiveness of taxpayer dollars to our region's transportation needs.

Extreme weather events driven by changing climate patterns are also placing an enormous strain on our transportation systems, creating growing service delays and costs necessary to modernize aging infrastructure. In Orange County, we see this first-hand with the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor, or LOSSAN, that runs through the heart of my district. This is the second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor in the country, which millions of passengers rely on annually to get to their jobs, see family, or visit the beautiful beaches in my district. However, coastal erosion is threatening this key economic corridor. Unstable bluffs, hillsides, and other hazards brought on by coastal erosion are beginning to cause significant disruptions to transportation service for the region—including five shutdowns in Orange County over the past four years.

Federal support for infrastructure stabilization and resiliency is urgently needed to address vulnerabilities from extreme weather events and new climate patterns to ensure that intercity rail corridors like LOSSAN can continue to support passenger service, goods movement, and regional connectivity.

Air pollution from the transportation sector is a serious public health concern for Orange County. Southern California continues to have some of the worst smog and air pollution rates in the nation. This pollution costs the state and country billions of dollars annually in healthcare costs and lost productivity. We need to take advantage of new technologies that are coming to the market to diversify transportation options, reduce carbon emissions and fuel costs, and create healthier communities—all while creating jobs and spurring innovation. Unfortunately, this Administration has been hostile to these efforts and has targeted programs like the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program that are helping build out the infrastructure necessary to support zero-emission vehicles.

As it develops its surface transportation package, this Committee cannot dismiss the importance of zero-emission vehicles for averting the most devastating consequences of the climate crisis and leaving future generations with a livable world. I urge this Committee to continue funding critical programs, including those supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, that are helping decarbonize transportation systems across the country.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these priorities. I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this Committee as you work to reauthorize the surface transportation bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

Are there questions from committee members for Representative—Representative Min, I do have a question for you.

If you could describe briefly—you talked about the suballocation of resources. Can you provide any granularity to what the barriers that you have experienced are?

What would be an example or some examples of those barriers?

Mr. MIN. I think right now it is—what we have heard is mostly a lack of certainty. Like, that our OCTA, Orange County Transportation Authority, they are unclear on which funds they can use. And so we would like to just—as I mentioned, I have more specificity. If you would like, I can communicate with OCTA and see if they have specific requests that we can further to your committee staff.

Mr. PERRY. I think it would help the committee to know that, and how that is being manifested in communities. And so, as we are looking forward to writing the next surface bill, I think that would be important input to have.

Mr. MIN. I appreciate your receptiveness to that, and we will get back to you shortly, Chair.

[The information follows:]

Hon. Dave Min's Post-Hearing Response to Request for Information from Hon. Scott Perry on Instances in Which Suballocation Has Been Denied for Surface Transportation Funds

The following is in addition to the remarks that I provided at the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Member Day on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, regarding a question from Congressman Scott Perry on instances in which sub-allocation has been denied for surface transportation funds. I greatly appreciate and welcome the opportunity to respond.

In 2021, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration issued a corrective action against the California Department of Transportation, asserting that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) could not sub-allocate funding for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects to regional transportation agencies. This corrective action upends state law—which requires STBG and CMAQ sub-allocation by population—that has helped guide implementation of these funds for decades.

As mentioned in my remarks, this framework is particularly important for my constituents in Southern California, which is represented by the largest MPO in the country—representing six counties, nearly 200 cities, and over 19 million residents. Due to the sheer size and complexity of the region's transportation needs, sub-allocation to regional transportation agencies, such as county-level planning organizations, helps avoid bureaucratic inefficiencies and ensures that transportation funds are delivered more efficiently.

Since the agencies' 2021 corrective action, the state has been forced to go through a slower and more rigid process, leading to funding estimates and project selections that are less reliable and responsive to regional needs. This has significantly reduced the flexibility of regional transportation agencies to adjust funds, respond to real-world issues, or support long-term planning—issues that will only grow as the region prepares for the 2026 Olympics.

Clarifying that local sub-allocation is allowed for the STBG and CMAQ programs is critical to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of taxpayer dollars, reduce administrative complexity for the state, and support the ability for states to retain federal transportation funds.

My office and I welcome the opportunity to answer any additional questions about this request. Thank you once again to the Committee for its consideration.

Mr. PERRY. All right. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MIN. Thank you.

Mr. PERRY. All right. The Chair now recognizes Representative Tlaib.

TESTIMONY OF HON. RASHIDA TLAIB, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Chair Perry and, of course, Ranking Member Larsen, for this opportunity. I always like the opportunity to bring my district here to Congress, and hope that I can share with all of you some of the challenges and hopes for the goals of this committee.

I want to start in regards to hazardous materials enforcement. Mr. Chair and Ranking Member, we all know in the aftermath of the East Palestine, Ohio, rail disaster, there are, rightfully, growing concerns over safety. And the focus now more than ever needs to be around enforcement and protection regarding transportation of hazardous materials through many of our communities.

In Detroit, Mr. Chair, we have the 94-year-old Ambassador Bridge. It spans the Detroit River and connects the United States to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Over 20 percent of trade crosses that bridge, but most importantly, even, it's located upstream of a municipal drinking water intake system. The bridge is privately

owned by the Detroit International Bridge Company. It is very rare to have such an important trade corridor—and it has a long history, though, of illegal activity and disregard of safety rules and regulation. The long-time owner even was jailed at one point and held in contempt for not following court orders.

Last year, Mr. Chair, the State of Michigan made a regrettable decision to loosen restrictions on hazmat transportation across this bridge over so many residents' objections in both Detroit and Windsor.

The bridge is too old. It is narrow. It lacks proper firefighting and other hazardous mitigations. The Federal agencies in charge of enforcing hazardous material regulation includes Customs and Border Patrol as well as PHMSA, and they lack the resources to do aggressive enforcement that safeguards our public health. Numerous conversations continue to confirm that.

So, I encourage, please, the committee to support the highest possible funding for PHMSA's hazardous materials field operation so that they can provide proper and timely compliance inspections on the Ambassador Bridge and others like it.

I also want to talk about how we know that the State of Michigan also suffered one of the worst inland oilspills in our Nation's history when Enbridge's Line 6B dumped 1 million gallons of heavy crude oil in the Kalamazoo River. Enbridge continues to violate State law by operating its Line 5 pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac in the Great Lakes. Many of my residents have not forgotten about the Nation's—again, worst inland oilspill in our Nation with the Line 6B. The Kalamazoo River, the crude oil and the images, many of us still remember.

So, the importance of pipeline inspections and enforcement cannot be overstated. I urge the highest possible level of funding of PHMSA's pipeline field operations to help safeguard the Great Lakes for generations to come.

Next, Mr. Chair, I know you hear from a lot of my colleagues in regards to this, but my district is home to many communities in close proximity to the Detroit Metro Airport, and many residents are burdened by excessive air and noise pollution. I encourage the committee, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member, to support the level of funding that is necessary for the Federal Aviation Administration's airport noise compatibility planning referred to in part 150 to be able to do their jobs effectively.

Robust funding for part 150 would allow Detroit Metro and airports like it across our Nation to update their noise mitigation plans. It is so important more frequently to adjust to changing weather patterns, also airline trends and urban growth. This, in turn, will better protect many of our residents from pollution and disruptions in their everyday lives, and will help local governments respond to resident concerns. I still get calls from the same woman from my first term in regards to noise pollution, and I believe that she wants us to do more, and I agree with her.

Two more items, Mr. Chair. Many of you don't know, but I lost my uncle to—a car hit him, and 2 hours later, he lost his life. So, I want us to do more about pedestrian safety. After that happened, so many people in my community called me and said that happened to their mother, happened to their child. A grandfather

called and said it happened to his grandson. So, I encourage the committee to continue to support the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program, which funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway fatalities as well as serious injuries. Our district has suffered far too many roadway pedestrian casualties, and our local governments need that support and help in designing better pedestrian infrastructure again to keep us all safe.

Lastly, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member, many of my residents live a few hundred feet from major Federal highways and experience elevated rates of significant health problems due to increased air pollution exposure from those highways. Sound walls, cut sections, roadside vegetation can all help reduce exposure to air pollutants that harm our communities.

So again, I always say this, children can't learn if they are hungry, but they also can't learn if they can't breathe clean air. And so many schools in my community butt right up against service drives of large highways that are very congested. So I urge the committee to please support funding of green buffers and other means of reducing residents' exposure to transportation-related air pollutants, especially in communities like mine.

With that, I yield back.

[Ms. Tlaib's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rashida Tlaib, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,
Thank you for the opportunity to share written testimony regarding my priorities within the Committee's jurisdiction for the 119th Congress.

PHMSA HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ENFORCEMENT

In the aftermath of the East Palestine, Ohio rail disaster, there is rightfully more focus than ever on the transportation of hazardous materials through our communities.

In Detroit, the 94-year-old Ambassador Bridge spans the Detroit River and connects the U.S. to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Over 20% of trade crosses over the crossing, which is located upstream of municipal drinking water intakes. The bridge is privately owned by the Detroit International Bridge Company, which has a long history of illegal activity and disregard for safety rules and regulations. The long-time owner was even jailed and held in contempt for not following court orders.

Last year, after years of lobbying Michigan state government and ghost-writing letters of support from lawmakers who accepted campaign donations, the State of Michigan made the regrettable decision to loosen restrictions on hazmat transportation across the Bridge over community objections in both Detroit and Windsor, Ontario. The bridge is too old, too narrow, and lacks proper firefighting and other hazard mitigations.

The federal agencies in charge of enforcing hazardous materials regulations—which include Customs and Border Patrol and PHMSA—lack the resources for aggressive enforcement that safeguards public health. I encourage the Committee to support the highest possible funding for PHMSA's Hazardous Materials Field Operations so that it can provide proper and timely compliance inspections on the Ambassador Bridge and others like it.

LINE 5 AND PHMSA PIPELINE FIELD OPERATIONS

Michigan is home to numerous oil and natural gas pipelines and has already suffered one of the worst inland oil spills in our nation's history when Enbridge's Line 6B dumped a million gallons of heavy crude oil into the Kalamazoo River. As Enbridge continues to violate state law by operating its Line 5 pipeline through the

Straits of Mackinac in the Great Lakes, the importance of pipeline inspections and enforcement cannot be overstated. I urge the Committee to support the highest possible level of funding for PHMSA's Pipeline Field Operations to help safeguard the Great Lakes for generations to come. Moreover, I urge the Committee to reject any support for the Line 5 pipeline or the Line 5 tunnel project.

FAA NOISE MITIGATION

Michigan's 12th District is home to many communities within close proximity to the Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW), and many of our residents are burdened by the air and noise pollution that comes with living under flight paths. I encourage the Committee to support the highest possible level of funding for the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Noise Compatibility Planning, referred to as Part 150. Robust funding for Part 150 will allow DTW and airports like it across the country to update their noise mitigation plans more frequently to adjust to changing weather patterns, airline trends, and in DTW's case, the Cleveland/Detroit Metroplex Project. This in turn will better protect our residents from pollution and disruptions to their everyday lives and will help local governments respond to resident concerns.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

I also encourage the Committee to continue support for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program, which funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries. Our district has suffered far too many roadway and pedestrian casualties, and our local governments need more support designing better roadways and pedestrian infrastructure to keep us all safe.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY BUFFERS

Many of my residents live within a few hundred feet of major federal highways and experience elevated rates of significant health problems due to increased air pollution exposure. Sound walls, cut sections, and roadside vegetation can all help reduce exposure to air pollutants that harm our communities. I urge the Committee to support funding for green buffers and other means of reducing residents' exposure to transportation-related air pollutants, especially in environmental justice communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these important priorities for the 12th district and all of Michigan.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. Are there questions from members of the committee?

The ranking member is recognized.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you.

Representative Tlaib, I just want to make a note on this. You provided a lot. I just want to focus on the Safe Streets and Roads for All. I am hearing a lot from local MPOs, RTPCs who have these planning grants and now are going to be done with their plans and are questioning whether or not the money now will be there to implement those plans in the next surface bill. And I think it is important that you highlighted this, because it is about separating cars from bikes, cars from people, people from cars, bikes from cars. It is about roadway safety when we still have 40,000 roadway deaths a year, and so I appreciate you bringing that up.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes, and Mr. Larsen, I come from a district—we don't really have mass transit. Cars are everywhere in the Metro Detroit area. And if anything, a lot of the corridors and areas like where my uncle was hit, it has grown economically, which is great, but the pedestrians and the growth in business and people trying—because it is right in a neighborhood, and he was just at a fruit market.

And I think for me it was eye-opening, how many people reached out and said, do you know this happened to me? I almost got hit

by a car. I mean, it is just overwhelming. And I think there is a great need, especially because local governments just don't have the capacity. They need the Federal partnership.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. The Chair now recognizes Representative Kiggans for testimony.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mrs. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you very much, Chair Perry and Ranking Member Larsen, and the committee, just for making time today for people like me to come and talk about the things that are important to our district. And I have the privilege of representing Virginia's Second Congressional District, so Hampton Roads, home to our Atlantic Fleet. A lot of defense and veterans live there, but it is also home to critical coastal communities and hard-working families. And my remarks today are going to focus on three issues important in my district: the WOTUS rule, which impacts local development; the urgent need for air traffic control modernization; and the importance of parity for our Coast Guard servicemembers.

So to start out with the Army Corps of Engineers and the WOTUS rule, local housing development in my district has been severely restricted by the Biden-era Waters of the United States, or WOTUS, rule. This rule, applied under the previous administration, did not align with the Supreme Court's *Sackett* decision, and led to Federal overreach, permitting delays, and uncertainty for developers.

I commend the Trump administration for initiating rulemaking under the Administrative Procedure Act to replace the Biden WOTUS framework. Congress must work closely to monitor this process and ensure that if a new Trump-era WOTUS rule is enacted, it is implemented swiftly and as intended.

We have had a lot of meetings and roundtables just with local developers and construction industry representatives, and I need more housing, I need more development. I need it for my military families. I think this committee is well aware of our base infrastructure challenges right now. So we are looking off base. What does that look like to complement that? Housing is an important piece of that quality of life, quality of service component for our military for recruitment and retention.

We have great local partners that want to build, but they are hamstrung, again, by this WOTUS rule. And we have met time and time again. The wait that they are having to go through is unacceptable. A couple different groups have said people have died, just passed away, waiting for approval so they can start these projects. They have the land, they have the motivation, they have the resources they need to complete these projects, especially housing, but we need that to be enacted. I need that Army Corps piece, especially with some of these wetlands issues, to be resolved and to be resolved quickly.

The second thing is the Federal Aviation Administration air traffic control workforce issues. And Virginia's Second District is home

to Naval Air Station Oceana, which is the Navy's east coast master jet base. As a former Navy pilot, I understand the critical role of air traffic control and training readiness and civilian aviation safety. The United States currently faces a shortfall of nearly 3,000 air traffic controllers. It is an unacceptable risk to our National Airspace System. I appreciate the work of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and support the President's \$12.5 billion investment to modernize air traffic control systems and expand training pipelines.

Not only have I heard in my official capacity here in Washington from air traffic controllers about this issue, but I have many, many pilot friends who have transitioned now from the Navy into airline jobs. And when you listen to those guys talk about the safety issues from the constraints of ATC, what that looks like, it is impacting their ability to do their job safely and their ability for consumers to have timely air travel. So this should be a priority, fixing that system. And I think—I don't even need to mention what happens as a result of not having adequate and sufficient air traffic control. So I appreciate prioritizing that.

The third thing I wanted to advocate for was my Coast Guard Parity Act. And as a Navy veteran, I am proud to advocate for all servicemembers, and that includes the Coast Guard, which remains the only branch without full parity and separation policies. The Coast Guard Parity Act would ensure enlisted members with 18 or more years of service are not involuntarily separated before becoming eligible for retirement. This bill brings Coast Guard standards in line with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force. It supports the morale, retention, and fairness, and honors the long-term commitment of those who serve in our maritime force.

We are thankful for our Coast Guard, especially for our large presence along our coastline in Virginia, but they are instrumental in maritime defense, border security, and just maritime safety, and we need to make sure that we have their backs, as well.

So, in closing, these issues—housing development, aviation safety, and military parity—are vital to the security, stability, and prosperity of my district and our Nation. I urge the committee to support efforts that reduce Federal overreach, invest in infrastructure, and treat all servicemembers with equal respect and support.

Thank you very much for your time today.

[Mrs. Kiggans' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Jennifer A. Kiggans, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia

As the Representative of Virginia's Second Congressional District, I remain committed to ensuring that federal policies support—rather than hinder—local development, national security, and fairness for all servicemembers.

ON THE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES (WOTUS) RULE:

Local development of housing within my district has been significantly stifled by the Biden-era WOTUS rule. This rule, as applied by the previous administration, failed to adhere to the Supreme Court's *Sackett* decision, perpetuating broad federal overreach, slow implementation, poor guidance to regulated communities, and costly delays for critical infrastructure projects. I commend the Trump Administration for

taking swift action to lay the groundwork for Administrative Procedure Act rule-making to update and replace the Biden-WOTUS rule. As Members of Congress, we must remain vigilant and ensure that, if a Trump-WOTUS rule is enacted, it is implemented efficiently and faithfully.

ON THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL WORKFORCE AND AVIATION SAFETY:

My district is home to Naval Air Station Oceana, the East Coast Master Jet Base of the U.S. Navy. As a former naval aviator, I fully appreciate the vital importance of well-trained aviation professionals. Currently, the United States faces a shortfall of nearly 3,000 air traffic controllers. However, I applaud the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's responsiveness to recent aviation safety concerns, and I support the President's \$12.5 billion investment to overhaul and modernize our aging air traffic control system and strengthen training and staffing pipelines.

ON THE COAST GUARD PARITY ACT:

As a Navy veteran, I deeply understand the value and sacrifice of military service. Yet, the Coast Guard remains the only branch of our armed forces without full parity in separation policies. The Coast Guard Parity Act ensures that enlisted members with over 18 years of service are not involuntarily separated before reaching retirement eligibility. This legislation brings Coast Guard standards in line with those of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force. It will improve morale, enhance retention, and rightfully honor the dedication of long-serving Coast Guardsmen. Our Coast Guard deserves the same respect, benefits, and protections afforded to every other military branch.

Together, these issues reflect our commitment to national defense, infrastructure development, and fairness for all servicemembers.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. Are there questions from the committee?

I would just comment, hearing no other comments or questions, I would just comment regarding your advocacy for modernization of the ATC system. As an Army aviator myself, trying to land with an NDB in 2025 is an unacceptable prospect, right? So—but I am encouraged by the President's interest and focus on this, as well as Secretary Duffy's and this committee's, in particular under the subcommittee chair.

And I would just encourage you to reach out to Representative Nehls regarding that if you have specific ideas, because he is going to be leading the charge here from the committee standpoint. And I thank the gentlelady.

Mrs. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair now recognizes Representative Mackenzie from Pennsylvania.

TESTIMONY OF HON. RYAN MACKENZIE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. MACKENZIE. Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present just some of the transportation and infrastructure priorities of Pennsylvania's Seventh Congressional District which encompasses the Greater Lehigh Valley, a region experiencing rapid growth and serving as a critical logistics and manufacturing hub in the Northeast.

I am going to talk about three priorities today for our district. The first is highway and bridge modernization. The second is prioritizing community safety through targeted Federal programs. And third and final would be rail safety and access.

In the category of highway and bridge modernization, Pennsylvania's infrastructure challenges are well documented. Statewide, 13 percent of bridges are rated in poor condition, nearly double the national average of 7 percent. In Lehigh and Northampton Counties, for instance, 10 percent of bridges are rated as being in poor condition, and those bridges are on average of 93 years old. My constituents continue to express frustration over the persistent congestion and deteriorating roadways and the conditions of those bridges in our local communities.

Interstates 78 and 476 are vital corridors for commerce and daily commutes. However, the frequently experienced congestion impacts economic productivity and quality of life. I urge the committee to support Federal programs aimed at expanding highway capacity, enhancing safety, and accelerating bridge replacement projects to address these pressing needs.

In the second category about community safety, the Greater Lehigh Valley has transportation challenges that impact more than just traffic. They pose serious safety risks for families and communities like Allentown and Bethlehem. That is why I am encouraged by the structure of the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, which empowers local governments to develop data-driven safety action plans designed to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

These federally authorized safety planning efforts are already helping our local leaders identify high-risk corridors and design commonsense solutions such as safer intersections, pedestrian infrastructure, and traffic-calming improvements that directly respond to the needs of our residents.

This program stands apart because it puts local communities and their safety priorities first, rather than pushing top-down Federal mandates that often miss the mark for a community like ours. As the committee considers future surface transportation reauthorization proposals, I encourage you to maintain this program, but I would also actually encourage you to improve this program.

We saw during the last administration that local communities in our area had an approval from the Department of Transportation with the Biden administration, but then years-long delays. And back-and-forth between the local municipality and the Department of Transportation led to those safety improvements never actually being done. They were talked about, they were advertised as something that the previous administration was going to be doing, but because of delays and inefficiencies in the Biden administration's Department of Transportation, those safety improvements were never carried out.

In the third and final category, rail safety and access. As a major freight corridor, the Greater Lehigh Valley relies on a safe and efficient rail network. Federal support for grade crossing safety improvements, track upgrades, and technologies to prevent derailments is essential to protect our communities while supporting the economic benefits that freight rail provides. This support is also important for reducing congestion on our local roadways.

It is imperative that the Greater Lehigh Valley's voice is heard also in future Amtrak expansion decisions, and I look forward to

working with the committee to ensure our communities have their passenger rail options that they seek out.

In conclusion, the Greater Lehigh Valley's growth underscores the urgent need for strategic investments in transportation infrastructure. Addressing the aging and deficient roads and bridges, expanding passenger rail, and enhancing safety measures are critical steps to ensuring economic vitality and quality of life for our residents.

I look forward to collaborating with the committee to advance these priorities for Pennsylvania's Seventh District, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

[Mr. Mackenzie's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Ryan Mackenzie, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present the transportation and infrastructure priorities of Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District, encompassing the Greater Lehigh Valley—a region experiencing rapid growth and serving as a critical logistics and manufacturing hub in the Northeast.

1. HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE MODERNIZATION

Pennsylvania's infrastructure challenges are well-documented. Statewide, 13% of bridges are rated in poor condition, nearly double the national average of 7%. In Lehigh and Northampton counties, 10% of bridges are rated as being in poor condition, and those bridges are an average of 93 years old. My constituents continue to express frustration over persistent congestion and deteriorating roadway conditions.

Interstates 78 and 476 are vital corridors for commerce and daily commutes. However, they frequently experience congestion which impacts economic productivity and quality of life. I urge the Committee to support federal programs aimed at expanding highway capacity, enhancing safety, and accelerating bridge replacement projects to address these pressing needs.

2. PASSENGER RAIL RESTORATION

Restoring direct passenger rail service to the Greater Lehigh Valley is a critical step towards unlocking new economic opportunities and relieving congestion on some of the region's busiest roadways. Connecting our communities to New York City and Philadelphia by rail would strengthen our economy, reduce highway congestion, and give residents and businesses the transportation options they deserve. I support the ongoing efforts to expand Amtrak service from New York City to Scranton, and I urge the Committee to build on that progress by prioritizing passenger rail connections that bring service directly to the Greater Lehigh Valley.

3. FREIGHT RAIL SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY

As a major freight corridor, the Greater Lehigh Valley relies on a safe and efficient rail network. Federal support for grade crossing safety improvements, track upgrades, and technologies to prevent derailments is essential to protect our communities while supporting the economic benefits that freight rail provides.

4. PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY SAFETY THROUGH TARGETED FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In the Greater Lehigh Valley, transportation challenges impact more than just traffic—they pose serious safety risks for families in communities like Allentown and Bethlehem. That's why I am encouraged by the structure of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, which empowers local governments to develop data-driven safety action plans designed to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

These federally authorized safety planning efforts are already helping our local leaders identify high-risk corridors and design commonsense solutions—such as safer intersections, pedestrian infrastructure, and traffic calming improvements—that directly respond to the needs of our residents. This program stands apart be-

cause it puts local safety priorities first, rather than pushing top-down federal mandates that often miss the mark for communities like ours.

As the Committee considers future surface transportation reauthorization proposals, I encourage you to maintain and strengthen the Safe Streets and Roads for All program's focus on local control, safety outcomes, and practical implementation. By preserving this targeted, community-centered approach in future authorizing legislation, Congress can ensure that transportation policy remains squarely focused on saving lives and improving safety on our nation's roadways.

CONCLUSION

The Greater Lehigh Valley's growth underscores the urgent need for strategic investments in transportation infrastructure. Addressing the aging and deficient roads and bridges, expanding passenger rail service, and enhancing safety measures are critical steps toward ensuring economic vitality and quality of life for our residents. I look forward to collaborating with the Committee to advance these priorities for Pennsylvania's 7th District.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I yield back.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Are there questions?

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Again, thanks for coming in, Representative Mackenzie. Thanks again for Safe Streets for All mentioned, it shows it is bipartisan, and Rashida—Representative Tlaib—as well, spoke to that.

And I would just underscore we are really going to need support from folks like you who want Amtrak service and Amtrak service expansion. I think it is a target in the budget to cut, and so we need to show a broad base of support for Amtrak service throughout the country. And so I appreciate you bringing that up. Thanks.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. I would just say to Representative Mackenzie, welcome to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and your comments regarding Route 78, particularly impactful to me. I can't think literally of a time—and I am sure I don't drive it nearly as much as you do, because it is a little bit of a hike for me, but I can't think of one time I have ever been on 78 when it hasn't been under construction. I can't think of one time. So I don't know if that is good or bad, but it certainly needs the work. So thank you for your testimony today.

With that, the Chair will now recognize Representative Cisneros.

TESTIMONY OF HON. GILBERT RAY CISNEROS, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to testify in support of critical transportation and infrastructure programs that support my constituents in California's 31st District and communities across the Nation.

This committee will soon begin drafting the surface transportation reauthorization bill. The most recent surface reauthorization bill, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, funded roughly 66,000 projects across the United States. This amounted to almost \$570 billion for projects to improve roads, repair bridges, modernize transit systems, support public safety, and more. This legislation created programs to build out electric vehicle charging infrastructure, created American manufacturing jobs through the low and no

emission bus programs, and invested in workforce development in the transit and trucking fields.

Modernizing our transportation infrastructure should not be a partisan issue. Modern and safe transit, roads, and bridges support economic activity across the United States. They support countless people who just want to get to work and to school. These investments support American manufacturing jobs right here at home, in districts across the political spectrum.

And with the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games coming to Los Angeles County, we must make needed investments in transportation infrastructure, not only to host the international athletes and visitors, but to ensure our local economies benefit from the economic opportunities that these global events will bring.

Safe, modern transportation infrastructure is integral to our economic success as a Nation. As you draft the surface transportation reauthorization bill, I urge my colleagues not to allow politics to get in the way of supporting American jobs in your districts and the economic growth of the United States.

Specifically, I urge full funding for the Low or No Emission Grant Program; Urbanized Area Formula Grants, the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to support low-capacity communities, and the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program.

Critically, I also support a significant investment in transportation needs, especially in public transit needs such as buses and rail, ahead of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I hope you will keep these priorities in mind as you draft legislation for the benefit of our communities. Thank you.

[Mr. Cisneros' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr., a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to testify in support of critical transportation and infrastructure programs that support my constituents in California's 31st District and communities across the nation.

This committee will soon begin drafting the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill.

The most recent surface reauthorization bill, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded roughly 66,000 projects across the United States. This amounted to almost \$570 billion for projects to improve roads, repair bridges, modernize transit systems, support public safety, and more.

This legislation created programs to build out electric vehicle charging infrastructure, created American manufacturing jobs through the low and no emission buses program, and invested in workforce development in the transit and trucking fields.

Modernizing our transportation infrastructure should not be a partisan issue. But I'm concerned that our nation's transportation needs will fall victim to the Majority's political partisanship.

Modern and safe transit, roads, and bridges support economic activity across the United States. They support countless people who just want to get to work and school. These investments support American manufacturing jobs right here at home, in districts across the political spectrum.

And with the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games coming to Los Angeles County, we must make needed investments in transportation infrastructure. Not only to host international athletes and visitors, but to ensure our

local economies benefit from the economic opportunities that these global events will bring.

Safe, modern transportation infrastructure is integral to our economic success as a nation.

As you draft the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill, I urge my colleagues across the aisle to not allow politics to get in the way of supporting American jobs in your districts and the economic growth of the United States.

Specifically, I urge full funding for the Low or No Emission Grant Program, Urbanized Area Formula Grants, the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, the Re-connecting Communities Pilot Program to support low-capacity communities, and the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program.

Critically, I also support a significant investment in transportation needs—especially public transit needs—ahead of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I hope you will keep these priorities in mind as you draft legislation for the benefit of our communities.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Are there questions from members of the committee?

Hearing none, the Chair thanks the gentleman for his testimony. The Chair now recognizes Representative Issa.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DARRELL ISSA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Johnson. I have two issues here today, one of which is of the making of this committee, one is not, but both you can address and help us with.

The first is one that Ranking Member Johnson is well aware of. The growth in the court over the last many decades has not been even. It has, in fact, been greater in some areas than others, much of this due either to border activities and/or intellectual property litigation. San Diego is both. So in anticipation of that, the Federal court system, at their own expense back in the early 2000s, built a courthouse that had room for growth, room for additional space.

This was not arbitrary. In fact, this was a second courthouse that was collocated but not contiguous, not purely contiguous, with the original courthouse. They recognized that they had outgrown the old courthouse dramatically, that they were in leased space all over the city, and that in consolidation, they didn't want to have to do it again because there was no room—even with eminent domain, there was no room for expansion further. Therefore, they built this courthouse with future growth.

This committee, recognizing that they didn't need it at that time, said, come back to us when you need more, and we have done so on multiple occasions. The first time, we got two additional. We are now in a situation in which this committee has not acted promptly. And as a result, we have judges in makeshift courthouses around the city. These are Article III Federal judges and bankruptcy judges. The inefficiency and the risk to these judges, both for themselves and in the transfer of criminal individuals related to trial, creates a burden, an expense, and a risk. And this continues.

We have applied multiple times for a waiver dating back some years. We have not been granted one. We are here today to say, the time is up. The committee and its staff have simply not acted and continue to ask us for additional information.

Mr. Chairman, your own staff has told us you are never going to give us the waiver. I am here to say, give us the waiver.

The fact is, we are the only courthouse in the United States of America that has to come to this committee. On top of that, the funds are not coming from appropriation, but in fact, are made by the court system where they allocate it to where they believe they should. So the idea that when we have judges who are remote that we want to bring back in, that we are not able to simply because a building already existing has rooms that have not been prepared for the judges makes no sense.

I am here sounding like we are in the minority. I am here sounding like we are the opposition party. But as Ranking Member Johnson knows, I am passionate about the safety of our judges. And I know everyone on this dais has supported the various measures to bring additional safety to all of our judges, both at the High Court and the district court. This is a safety risk. This is one that should not continue. It is also a cost risk.

I would ask you to please give it your highest attention. It is an exemption that should be pulled off. I understand why it was put on, but quite frankly, it has more than outlived its usefulness.

I would close on that issue and say the next time the court comes to building a building, would you like them to build a building with no room for growth in a growing area and thus, in fact, need a third, a fourth, or a fifth building over the years? It is not efficient. It makes no sense.

I will close with this. There is something not of your making. The fact is the growth of electric vehicles, vehicles that do not pay the gas tax, has created a desire by many areas, including in my hometown under an organization known as SANDAG, which is the regional authority for building roads, they have repeatedly proposed taxing miles on all vehicles to make up the shortage that they believe is there because of higher efficiency vehicles and vehicles that don't use gasoline or diesel fuel at all.

I would ask this committee to seriously look at prohibiting that tracking system in order to collect that. I think, as a matter of being a pure Libertarian, if we continue to allow further tracking in the name of taxation, where will it lead, and where will it end?

I thank the committee.

[Mr. Issa's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Darrell Issa, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this Member Day hearing to hear from rank-and-file Members across the Congress regarding our priorities.

I would like to raise two issues for the Committee's consideration today—both of importance to my District and with nationwide implications.

First, is a concern of judicial efficiency in San Diego. As the Committee knows, in 2009 this Committee authorized the construction of the Carter-Keep Courthouse Annex in San Diego. This is a federal courthouse that includes courtrooms and chambers of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

At the time of Congressional authorization, Congress presciently foresaw and planned for the future growth of the courts in the original construction. Consequently, the building which was constructed provides significant extra capacity

with the result that the court has shared the modern, secure building with other federal tenants.

Since then, the court's space requirements have grown, as anticipated, and so they have requested Congressional permission to build out chambers and court-rooms within the existing Courthouse space.

Completion of this project will improve the safety and security of the court as well as improve efficiency by consolidating the court's operations into a unified space designed for its use.

Importantly, I would note, only Committee approval is needed for the required renovation to proceed. And, *no* additional appropriations are required by Congress.

As the Chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Courts, Intellectual Property, the Internet, and Artificial Intelligence, I can confidently assert that this renovation is an appropriate and timely step toward efficient, safe, and planned-for operations of the court.

Given these considerations, and that the renovation in question has been needed and contemplated for several years beginning in the fall of 2022, I would respectfully request that the Committee authorize the San Diego renovation project and remove future renovation restrictions swiftly.

I would like to now turn to another matter of significant need for my District, one with great national import.

As the nation increasingly adopts electronic and hybrid vehicles, gas tax revenue will continue to decline. Consequently, policy makers have begun examining changes to the funding of road and bridge construction.

One idea that is unfortunately gaining purchase is the concept of a per-mile tax, or mileage tax, under which drivers' trips are tracked, reported, and taxed per mile. While policymakers may be interested in this option as a theoretical matter, as a practical matter, implementation of this sort of mileage tax requires drivers to have a government-approved tracker in their vehicles. Such a proposal would allow the government to monitor the movements of every driver wherever they go, record and database such movements, and tax their every move.

California often pilots bad ideas first, and the track-and-tax scheme was no exception. A few years ago, the local joint powers authority that covers much of my district, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), attempted to pioneer such a scheme. Now, Caltrans, the state authority, is reviewing implementation options.

Needless to say, the San Diego track and tax plan was wildly unpopular in my District and opposition was immediate and widespread. In fact, a constituent survey of the district I represent found that more than 90 percent of all residents opposed this type of "track and tax" proposal—the most decisive response we have ever received.

Thankfully, we defeated the initial plan, and today SANDAG has shared there are no current plans to revisit. However, Sacramento is now weighing statewide options instead. And, federal pilot projects show many communities are testing similar plans.

I have repeatedly introduced the No Track, No Tax legislation to prevent such a government overreach.

As this Committee considers the future funding of America's transit ways, I believe that this misguided experiment is instructive that track-and-tax schemes have no place in a nation that prizes the freedom to drive whenever and wherever one pleases without the government monitoring one's every move.

I hope these considerations are helpful to the Committee as it continues its work in the 119th Congress. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Are there questions from the Members?

The ranking member is recognized.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. I thank the chair, and I thank the Members for your testimony today. And my partner, Representative Issa, on the Judiciary Committee has given eloquent testimony today on the need for this body to pay more attention to Article III of the Constitution, our judicial system.

And the truth of the matter, as we have discussed before, Representative Issa, is that we have, as a body—the legislative branch has neglected the needs of the judicial branch for many, many years. How long has it been, Representative Issa, since there has

been meaningful expansion of our court system in terms of judges and courthouses and courtrooms? And how does that impact us at this point?

Mr. ISSA. The last expansion was in the 1990s. However, there was a bipartisan bill broadly passed in the last Congress and resubmitted in this Congress that would make about a 10-percent increase which would be about 66 judges needing courtrooms around the country.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. And some of the facilities in which those courtrooms would be built are already situated in such a way as they can accommodate the buildout of those facilities to accommodate the need for more courtrooms.

Mr. ISSA. The court has been trying to use its funds to do just that for more than 30 years.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. But we need to do more to support that in terms of the legislative branch. Is that your testimony today?

Mr. ISSA. That is, Ranking Member.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. And last, Representative Issa, you spoke about really taxing electric vehicle owners in the same way that internal combustion engine owners have to pay the gas tax. Do you agree with the thinking that a \$250 charge per year per electric vehicle in the United States is an appropriate way of having electric vehicle owners pay into the gas tax?

Mr. ISSA. I would highly recommend that a system occur that doesn't involve what was proposed in my home county, which is a real-time tracking system of every mile and every location. Simply as a constitutional reality, that is an invasion of people's privacy, but that is what is being proposed.

Many States do have, when they do their inspections every year or two, they do look at the mileage, and they could tax it based on that. So there is a number of ways that they could collect a fair and equal tax without tracking vehicles. And particularly in the case of the proposal in San Diego, which almost became law, they were going to track every vehicle, both gas and electric.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. PERRY. Are there further questions?

Seeing no others, I have a couple questions for the Representative.

So the waiver—so the courthouse was built in anticipation of growth. You are saying that you need it, and I don't doubt that that is justified. Why, if the courthouse was built in anticipation of growth, does it require a waiver?

Mr. ISSA. Because this committee slipped that in back in 2009 when it was being built, and it has just been a reality. We are the only courthouse in the country—it actually was, my understanding, Eleanor Holmes Norton and perhaps one other Member who thought it was worthwhile doing. I have questioned the Delegate from DC, and she doesn't remember the details of it or any need for it, so you might even check there.

This is kind of an odd one because I understand at the time of its original building, it had potential for up to six additional courtrooms, and building them out at that cost might have been expen-

sive. But what has happened in the interim is that they have—some are being used by the IRS and so on, but in the meantime, because we didn't get the waiver over a number of years, what has ended up happening is they have gone and built courtrooms in leased space. Those leases are coming due, and we would like to be able to build out the courtrooms at the cost to the court system from their funds in order to not have to renew those leases which could trap us again for years.

And, Chairman, the big question that my chief judge asked me in San Diego is, do you understand the risk to us of transferring prisoners and of our judges being in a courthouse that is, by definition, not nearly as secure because it is outside a perimeter that they designed for the two buildings that represent our combined court system.

Mr. PERRY. Understood. Thank you.

And then finally, your comment/questioning on the charges for electric vehicle charging, and how that—or not charging, but they will participate in paying for their use of the roads. And while I agree with you that this committee and this Congress should probably take action regarding local jurisdictions doing what you are talking about, and I am completely in concurrence with your assessment, we are also going to have to mind that this organization itself was seeking to do a very similar thing, and will seek to do the same thing in the future.

And I would be interested in working with you on a solution set for charging appropriately, similarly to what we do with gas- and diesel-powered vehicles for the fuel source. However, I am not looking for an opportunity for the IRS to review my electric bills or anybody's electricity bills. So, that is a particular challenge, and I would be interested in working with you on trying to find a solution set. And hopefully, we will have more than a couple of weeks to come—or, literally, 24 hours, which is what I had the last time offered—to find a solution set to this problem.

Mr. ISSA. Chairman, I look forward to it.

I have been here just long enough to remember the late Don Young warning us about the upcoming problem as we had fixed revenue per gallon and a clear forecast that per vehicle-mile we were going to use less fuel. And that was even before electric went to zero fuel. So it is legitimate that we find a way to have the revenue per mile driven come up to where perhaps it was when Don Young cried it is a problem in the 1990s.

Mr. PERRY. Right. All right. The Chair thanks the gentleman. The Chair now recognizes Representative Gluesenkamp Perez.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MARIE GLUESENKAMP PEREZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ranking Member. When your colleague, Rick Larsen, visited my district, he prudently described himself as the public works director at the Federal level, and those are the most popular people in my community, and so we appreciate the work you all do in this committee to make sure that we have the nuts and bolts of good Government working correctly, efficiently for the necessary things. And thank you for the

opportunity to testify today as the committee begins its work on surface transportation reauthorization.

As the ranking member knows well, my district is home to one of the largest, most complex, and most important bridge replacement projects in the country. The I-5 Bridge crosses the Columbia River. It is a critical stretch of I-5 that connects Portland, Oregon, with Vancouver, Washington. One span of the bridge was built in 1917, and the bridge is at risk of collapse in the event of a major earthquake, which—we are on the Cascadia subduction zone. This is a real risk. Congestion clogs the bridge for as many as 10 hours per day, keeping commercial vehicles from moving goods and people from getting home to their families.

We need a new bridge. That is why I am glad to have helped bring back \$2.1 billion for this project through the Mega and Bridge Investment Program grants award. These grant programs were created in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and are crucial to getting this project done. We must ensure that awarded funding goes out quickly and efficiently through our agency partners.

This isn't only a bi-state bridge in my district that needs repair. In fact, the Lewis and Clark Bridge, which connects Longview in my district to Rainier, Oregon, was included in the National Transportation Safety Board's recent report identifying bridges susceptible to collapse in an incident like the devastating collision in Baltimore.

As the committee considers a surface transportation reauthorization bill, I urge you to continue support for discretionary programs like the Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program that can help communities in my district make our bridges safe, durable, and congestion-free.

Separately, another issue that I have been hearing about from loggers in my community is related to restrictions on younger drivers hauling across State lines. My district is a giant border district; you can drive 5 hours all across the border. And these restrictions on younger drivers not being able to cross by State lines is a serious impediment to the industry and to these young professionals making their way in a career.

While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established an apprenticeship pilot program for individuals under 21 who hold a CDL to travel across State lines, this program was undersubscribed and did not bring real relief to constituents like mine who are frustrated by the regulations imposed on State boundaries. I am looking forward to working with the community to provide a pathway for 18- to 20-year-old CDL drivers to safely cross interstate lines. You learn how to drive log trucks safely by driving similar routes. A singular radius around the mileage isn't the same thing as being able to cross interstates freely to get those logs to a mill.

I would also like to mention an issue that draws the ire of thousands of Americans. If you spend any time on certain subreddits, some of which have thousands and thousands and thousands of subscribers, you will know about overly bright headlights. This is something that draws ire from rural Americans, from older Americans, from law enforcement. I understand the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law tried to improve this issue by allowing manufactur-

ers to make adaptive driving beams, but, let's be honest, it has not helped.

I am interested in working with the committee to ensure that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration develop overall maximum brightness on the lumens, standardizing headlights for automobiles that retain visibility for drivers but also reduce glare and increase safety for other drivers on the road.

Thank you again to the ranking member and the chair for the time to speak before this committee. I look forward to working with you both to deliver for people in my community of southwest Washington.

[Ms. Perez's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for the opportunity to testify today about the priorities for Southwest Washington as the Committee begins its work on a surface transportation reauthorization.

As the Ranking Member well knows, my district is home to one of the largest, most complex, and most important bridge replacement projects in the country. The I-5 bridge over the Columbia River is a critical stretch of I-5 that connects Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA. One span of the bridge was built in 1917, and the bridge is at risk for collapse in the event of a major earthquake. Plus, congestion clogs the bridge for as many as ten hours per day, keeping commercial vehicles from moving goods and people from getting home to their families.

We need a new bridge. That's why I am glad to have helped bring back over \$2.1 billion for this project through Mega and Bridge Investment Program grant awards. These grant programs were created in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and they are crucial to getting this project done. Now, we must work to ensure that the awarded funding goes out quickly and efficiently through our agency partners.

This isn't the only bi-state bridge in my district that needs repair. In fact, the Lewis and Clark Bridge, which connects Longview in my district to Rainier, Oregon, was included in the National Transportation Safety Board's recent report identifying bridges susceptible to collapse in an incident like the devastating collision in Baltimore.

As the Committee considers a surface transportation reauthorization bill, I urge you to continue support for discretionary programs like the Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program that can help communities in my district make our bridges safe, durable, and congestion free.

Another issue I have heard about from loggers in my district is related to the restrictions on younger drivers hauling across state lines. My district sits on the border of Oregon, which means that this imposes an unnecessary barrier for an important part of our workforce. While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established an apprenticeship pilot program for individuals under 21 who hold a CDL to travel across state lines, this program was undersubscribed and did not bring real relief to constituents like mine who are frustrated by the regulations imposed by state boundaries. I am looking forward to working with the committee to provide a pathway for 18- to 20-year-old CDL drivers to safely cross interstate lines.

Finally, I would also like to mention an issue that draws ire from many Americans: excessively bright headlights. I understand the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law tried to improve this issue by allowing manufacturers to make Adaptive Driving Beams, but let's be honest, this hasn't helped. I am interested in working with the Committee to ensure that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration develops overall maximum brightness standards for headlights on automobiles that retain visibility for drivers but also reduce glare for other folks on the road.

Thank you again Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for giving me the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to working with both of you to deliver for communities in Southwest Washington.

Ms. KING-HINDS [presiding]. Do you have a question, any Members have a question?

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. I have none, thank you.

Ms. KING-HINDS. All right. Thank you, Representative Gluesenkamp Perez. I now recognize Representative Hernández.

TESTIMONY OF HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ, A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER IN CONGRESS FROM THE TERRITORY OF PUERTO RICO

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

Madam Chair, it is appropriate to have you as chair in this moment, because the issues that I am about to address will probably be very familiar to you. I will be brief in my spoken remarks and submit the written testimony for the record. But in essence, I am here to talk about the state of Puerto Rico's infrastructure.

Puerto Rico is beautiful in many respects, but the state of its infrastructure is an exception. Time, storms, and earthquakes have damaged our infrastructure to levels not seen in our history, and the work of this committee in helping our island recover from these disasters has been and will continue to be very important. So I come here with two concrete asks in light of our unique infrastructure challenges.

We would like that Congress continue funding programs like the State of Good Repair Grant Program under the Federal Transit Administration which gave San Juan last year \$11.1 million to strengthen its transit infrastructure and ensure safe, reliable services for our residents. I strongly urge the committee to maintain robust funding for this program and to ensure Puerto Rico's continued inclusion in its formula funding or grants that are automatically awarded to Territories, Commonwealths like the Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico, and States.

I would also like to thank this committee for their role in establishing the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation, PROTECT, Program under the Federal Highway Administration. Unfortunately, under this program, Puerto Rico does not currently receive a formula allocation, and it is critical for Puerto Rico's future to be included in the formula allocation under programs like PROTECT. We need consistent, equitable, and fair access to these resources to strengthen our infrastructure now before the next disaster strikes, which is not a question of if; it is more a question of when.

The reality is that, for Puerto Ricans, our transportation network is a lifeline. Its reliability directly impacts access to emergency services, education, and healthcare. So I urge the committee to include Puerto Rico in all formula and competitive grant programs. I urge the committee to do the same for the other Territories and Commonwealths of the United States.

Thank you for your leadership and for recognizing the importance of resilient, inclusive transit and infrastructure for Puerto Rico and the entire Nation.

[Mr. Hernández's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Pablo José Hernández, a Resident Commissioner in Congress from the Territory of Puerto Rico

I want to thank Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and the entire Committee for their time today and for the opportunity to discuss critical issues impacting Puerto Rico and the nation.

With just 20 days until the official start of hurricane season, Puerto Rico is already facing a series of intense storms and widespread flooding, resulting in island-wide power outages and road closures. But this is nothing new for my constituents. Puerto Rico is hit by storms that are only worsening as natural disasters become more frequent and severe. The damage they inflict on Puerto Rico's infrastructure highlights the fragility of our transportation systems and underscores the urgent need for continued investment in disaster-resilient surface transportation, including roads, bridges, and reliable public transportation.

Programs authorized through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) have been essential to addressing Puerto Rico's infrastructure challenges. Programs like the State of Good Repair Grant Program, under the Federal Transit Administration, which provides funding to ensure that public transit in cities operates safely, efficiently, and reliably by supporting repairs, upgrades, and replacements of key equipment and infrastructure. In FY2023, San Juan received an \$11.1 million grant through this program to strengthen its transit infrastructure and ensure safe, reliable service for its residents. I strongly urge the committee to maintain robust funding for this program and ensure Puerto Rico's continued inclusion in its formula funding—or grants that are automatically awarded to territories and states.

I would also like to thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member for their role in establishing the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program under the Federal Highway Administration, which makes surface transportation systems more resilient against climate change, extreme weather, flooding, and other natural disasters by supporting both planning and resilience improvements. This program has already helped communities nationwide enhance their resilience and strengthen public transportation systems. Although funding for this program is distributed through both formula and competitive grants, Puerto Rico does not currently receive a formula allocation. In 2017, Puerto Rico endured one of the deadliest natural disasters in the U.S. in over a century with Hurricane Maria. The storm devastated our energy grid, decimated roads, and severely damaged critical infrastructure. With extreme weather events becoming more frequent and severe, it's not a question of *if* another major storm will hit Puerto Rico—it's *when*. That's why it's critical for Puerto Rico to be included in the formula allocation under programs like PROTECT. We need consistent, equitable access to these resources to strengthen our infrastructure now, before the next disaster strikes.

The reality is that for Puerto Ricans, our transportation network is a lifeline. Its reliability directly impacts access to emergency services, education, and healthcare. When this system fails, particularly during hurricane season, the consequences could be deadly. As we move forward with this reauthorization, I urge the Committee to include Puerto Rico in all formula and competitive grant programs. Thank you for your leadership and for recognizing the importance of resilient, inclusive transit and infrastructure—for Puerto Rico and the entire nation.

Ms. KING-HINDS. Does the ranking member have any questions?

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. I have none.

Ms. KING-HINDS. All right. Thank you, Representative Hernández. I now recognize Representative Gonzalez.

TESTIMONY OF HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ OF TEXAS. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member, for holding today's Member hearing.

I represent the 34th Congressional District of Texas, which is where the border meets the coast. It is a resilient region that gets hit regularly by hurricanes and storms on the Texas coast, and one of the poorest regions in the country. We are extremely prone to severe flooding from heavy events, but we are working on a project that we have been working on for quite a while that I want to

bring to your attention that is critical to mitigating future floods, and it is called the Raymondville drain, which would improve drainage by building new connecting channels and widening the existing ones, making additional improvements on a 63-mile drainage that parallels the Rio Grande Valley.

In the last few years, south Texas has suffered multiple floods. Just a few months ago, we had a 20-inch flood in just a matter of hours. And last month—and we continue to struggle with it. My constituents were forced to evacuate, abandon vehicles, homes, property, and many had to be rescued during the storm. The rainfall resulted in massive flooding across Cameron, Willacy, and Hidalgo Counties, a place that has always been prone to storms. And in 1967, the last category 4 and 5 hurricane that hit the area, when there was a very limited population and most of it was rural, left the entire region under water.

According to a preliminary report from NOAA, just these last damages resulted in over \$100 million. As of April 14, 2025, we have confirmed over 5,000 homes that were damaged, many of them destroyed. And Congress must do more to effectively address the risk of severe flooding in communities like south Texas.

While the United States is one of the richest countries in the world, pockets of persistent poverty continue to exist. And sadly, financial hardship and poverty in these regions are exacerbated by severe storms and floodings. The Rio Grande Valley is one of these areas, and therefore, it is critical that the Raymondville drain project, which was originally authorized for construction by WRDA in 1986, almost four decades ago, and expanded in 2007, continues to move forward.

Once the Raymondville drain is completed, it will substantially improve stormwater management for the region. Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1, which is the lead non-Federal sponsor for this project, originally submitted its feasibility study to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for review in 2020. Since then, the drainage district has continued to closely work with the U.S. Army Corps and has recently submitted a plan for a section 203 study to the ASA.

I want to thank the committee for having this hearing, and I want to urge you all to look at this project. It is not very sexy when you talk about drainage and flooding. I know we deal with it in a lot of parts of the country. This is, really, a minor investment to what it would cost if we get another category 4 or 5 in this region. We are home to SpaceX, we are home to two LNG terminals that are coming, that are being constructed now, that are essential to the national security of this country. If we get a category 4 or 5 in this region, the entire region will be under water and it will cost our taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars in investment for this region to recover.

It is on the border. It is important for trade, for business, for energy; obviously, space exploration that is happening in the region. And I like to compare this to the levee that flooded the entire city of New Orleans, where many people died and it cost us hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayers to recover. Right now, we can get out of this for a fraction of the price. It has been on the books for

going on four decades. It is time for us to stop sitting on our hands and make critical investments in regions like south Texas.

I know there are others in the country that have similar situations. This is a critical one. I know that if it's not done, and we do get a category 4 or 5, we will be looking back wishing we had made this investment.

Thank you all so much for hosting this today.

[Mr. Vicente Gonzalez of Texas' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Vicente Gonzalez, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for holding today's Member Day hearing.

As you prepare to draft legislation and enact your agenda for the 119th Congress, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on a project that is critical to the 34th Congressional District of Texas—the Raymondville Drain Project.

South Texas is extremely prone to severe flooding from heavy rainstorms and hurricanes because it is relatively flat, low lying, and lacks adequate drainage infrastructure.

The completion of this project is critical to mitigating future floods and enhancing drainage capacity. It is also cost effective and, in the long term, will save the Federal government substantially more money in avoided disaster recovery costs than it costs to build.

The Raymondville Drain Project will improve drainage by building new connecting channels, widening existing ones, and making additional improvements to the approximate 63-mile drainage system from Edinburg Lake in Hidalgo County, Texas, to the Laguna Madre in Willacy County, Texas.

Over the last few years, South Texas has suffered multiple major floods that have cost our region tens of millions of dollars in damage.

Just last month, severe storms brought nearly 20 inches of rainfall to the Rio Grande Valley in just two days.

Many of my constituents were forced to evacuate, abandon vehicles and property, and be rescued during and after the storms.

The rainfall resulted in massive flooding across Cameron, Willacy, and Hidalgo Counties.

According to a preliminary report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) this resulted in at least \$100 million in damage.

As of April 14, 2025, (FEMA) confirmed that over 5,000 homes were damaged or impacted, and that 235 were destroyed, 842 affected, 2,618 minor, 1,911 major, and 235 destroyed.

Congress must do more to effectively address the risk of severe flooding in communities like mine.

While the United States is one of the richest countries in the world, pockets of persistent poverty exist.

Sadly, financial hardship and poverty in these regions are exacerbated by severe weather and flooding.

The Rio Grande Valley is one of these areas.

Therefore, it is critical that the Raymondville Drain Project, which was originally authorized for construction in WRDA (Water Resources Development Act) 1986—that's 38 years ago—and expanded by WRDA 2007, continues to move forward.

Once the Raymondville Drain is completed it will substantially improve storm water management for large sections of Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties.

Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1 (HCDI), who is the lead non-Federal sponsor, for this project, originally submitted its feasibility study to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA) for review in 2020.

Since then, the drainage district has worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to address their comments and plans to submit an updated Section 203 study to the ASA for approval in late Summer / early Fall of this year.

I want to thank the Committee for including a provision in WRDA 2024 directing Army Corps to expedite the review and coordination of this feasibility study.

Once this review has been completed by the Army Corps, I urge you and your colleagues to consider including language authorizing the construction of this vital project in WRDA 2026 or any other eligible vehicle.

Thank you, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Ms. KING-HINDS. Do any of the Members have any questions?
If none, thank you, Representative Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you.

Ms. KING-HINDS. I now recognize Representative Nunn.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. ZACHARY NUNN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IOWA**

Mr. NUNN OF IOWA. Well, thank you, Madam Chair King-Hinds and Ranking Member serving, Representative Johnson, Jr. Having these hearings is an important part for our communities to be able to come forward and highlight the transportation and infrastructure we need across our community.

Back home in my district in Iowa, we have a little bit of everything, from rural hometowns to a bustling metropolis in Des Moines. With that, we want to keep our economy moving forward, and we are asking the Federal Government to be a partner in this.

In speaking with the Iowa Department of Transportation; county, city, and State engineers; as well as local leaders, and most of all, Iowans; their voice has been resounding on this. Whether it is a farmer hauling grain or a local mayor trying to repave Main Street, Iowans need infrastructure that works, and they need a Washington that is a steady partner, not a roadblock.

Construction costs, as have been noted by my colleagues on this, have soared. The last surface transportation bill and our investments need to reflect real-world price increases and the pressures those bring.

How this money gets to the State matters just as much. Formula funding works. It's reliable, fast, gives local leaders certainty they need to plan ahead, and gets shovels in the ground. On the other hand, discretionary grant programs often feel like to my hometown guys a lottery, where some of them win and some of them lose, but they all do the same amount of hard work trying to get to that final point. Candidly speaking, that is not sustainable, and it doesn't help for long-term planning.

So I would like us to prioritize core formula programs that give States flexibility to move funds when they are needed most without all the redtape that builds up over years and years of doing this. Ask any local official in my district, and what is holding up the process is not the process itself, but the politics involved in the project.

Environmental reviews drag on for years. Reports that no one reads pile up on bureaucrats' desks. Federal rules that sound good in theory, but ultimately just end up adding more costs and less value. I will give you a perfect example. Under current law, if a project has already gone through an environmental review and a new rule comes out in the middle of that process, those guys have to start the entire process over from day one. That is not efficient. It is not helpful. And effectively, it is Government bureaucracy at its worst.

We need to streamline project delivery, reduce duplicative processes, and make sure that the focus is on result, not building up things other than infrastructure but things like paperwork piles. I

know your committee is working hard on this, and we want to thank you for your leadership and action on it. So I will get right to the point here.

Our number-one ask in Iowa: Help us invest in hard infrastructure. Iowa's transportation is largely built on our agriculture and advanced manufacturing. Farmers and business leaders rely on road access to be completed. And it is not just our State, it is every State from coast to coast that transports down our corridor. From north to south, east and west, it all comes through Iowa, which is why I am pushing for two commonsense updates to Federal law that will help Iowa farmers and business people across our country. Most importantly, it will help families.

The first is, let Iowa permits for vehicles over 108,000 pounds on key segments of I-380. Other States already do this. Iowans know this as I-65. And when it comes to harvest season, we have already been doing it for quite some time. If State highways get added to the interstate system, which we are asking for, let the trucks already operating on them operate with the same limits. There is no point in changing it after it becomes a Federal interstate. If they were operating safely before, I am confident they will not change their behavior overnight simply because it says "interstate" on the sign.

This will also help increase access to some of our biggest economic developments in the region, and help Des Moines grow as a hub for manufacturing in this space. This is support from our Farm Bureau and a significant portion of our ag land operators near this area.

Madam Chair, these aren't radical ideas. They are practical updates to keep an ag supply chain moving across our country.

Additionally, it invests in our rural innovation. Iowa has been a leader in using smart tech to manage traffic, reduce crashes, and stretch every dollar. We would like to continue with your help to build on that. The next bill should make it easier for Federal funds to start and clear standards that will help allow connectivity and growth, particularly for rural areas.

As this committee knows better than anyone, infrastructure is not a red or blue issue. It is about being able to get your kids to school safely. It is about getting goods to market. It is about allowing small towns and hometowns to have a shot at growth. Iowa is ready to innovate. We just need Congress to use the right tools.

Thank you for your leadership on this. We look forward to working together. I yield my time.

[Mr. Nunn's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Zachary Nunn, a Representative in Congress from the State of Iowa

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen—thank you for the opportunity to join you and share a few priorities that matter deeply to Iowans.

Back home in Iowa's Third District, we've got a little bit of everything—rural towns, growing cities, and key freight routes that keep our economy moving. Whether it's a farmer hauling grain to market or a local mayor trying to keep their main street from crumbling, the message is the same: Iowan's need infrastructure that works, and they need Washington to be a steady partner, not a roadblock.

KEEP FEDERAL FUNDING PREDICTABLE AND FLEXIBLE

Since the last time we reauthorized a surface transportation bill, we've seen major increases in construction costs and face continuing supply chain challenges. If we want to keep up, we've got to invest at a level that reflects the facts on the ground.

More than that, how the money gets out the door matters. Formula funding works. It's predictable, fast, and allows our state DOTs and local partners to plan ahead and actually get shovels in the ground. On the other hand, discretionary grant programs often feel like a lottery. Our local guys pour in staff time and money just to apply, and often walk away with nothing to show for it.

Let's prioritize core formula programs and give states the flexibility to move funds where they're needed most without all the red tape that has built up over the years.

CUT RED TAPE AND LET LOCALS BUILD

Ask any local official in my district what's slowing them down, and they'll tell you: process. Environmental reviews that drag on for years. Reports no one reads. Federal rules that sound good in theory but ultimately just add cost without adding value.

We have a great opportunity to address these problems by streamlining project delivery and cutting unnecessary regulations. For example, under current law, if a project has already gone through an environmental review and a new rule comes out in the middle of the process, they have to restart the entire review. That's not efficient. That's government red tape at its worst.

SUPPORT RURAL FREIGHT AND AGRICULTURE CORRIDORS

In Iowa, transportation is agriculture. Our farmers and manufacturers rely on solid roads to keep things moving. That's why I'm asking for a couple of common-sense updates to federal law that would really help Iowa farmers:

- Grant Iowa authority to issue permits for vehicles up to 108,000 pounds on a key segment of Interstate 380—something other states are already doing.
- If state highways get added to the Interstate system, let the trucks that already use them keep operating without new weight limits. If they were operating safely before, that's not going to change overnight.

These aren't radical changes—they're practical steps that keep our supply chains running and our costs down.

INVEST IN RURAL INNOVATION

Iowa's been a leader in using technology to manage traffic, improve safety, and make every dollar count. Let's build on that. The next bill should make it easier to use federal funds for smart infrastructure, keep investing in research, and make sure we've got clear standards around vehicle connectivity and data—especially for rural areas that are doing more with less.

CONCLUSION

This committee knows better than anyone: infrastructure is not a red or blue issue. It's about being able to get your kid to school safely. It's about getting goods to market. It's about small towns having a shot at growth.

Iowa is ready to innovate. We just need Congress to hand us the right tools. Thank you again for your leadership, and I look forward to working with this Committee to move these priorities forward.

Ms. KING-HINDS. Do any of the Members have any questions?

If none, thank you very much, Representative Nunn. I now recognize Representative Houlahan.

TESTIMONY OF HON. CRISSY HOULAHAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member, for the chance to testify before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today.

As the committee is working to advance the reauthorization of Federal pipeline safety in the 119th Congress, I am participating in this hearing to call attention to the deadly safety risks that are associated with something called Aldyl A plastic piping.

Two years ago, March 24, 2023, a natural gas-fueled explosion in my district at the R.M. Palmer chocolate factory in West Reading, Pennsylvania, tragically killed 7 people, injured 10, and displaced 3 families from their homes.

Two months ago, the National Transportation Safety Board completed its final report of that incident, and it determined that “the probable cause of the explosion was a degradation of a retired 1982 Aldyl A polyethylene service tee with a Delrin polyacetal insert that allowed natural gas to leak and migrate underground into the R.M. Palmer Company candy factory buildings, where it was ignited by an unknown source.”

The safety board recommended that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration advise natural gas distribution pipeline operators to address the risk that is associated with Aldyl A service tees by replacing or by remediating them.

Furthermore, the NTSB found that operators may not be aware of the locations of their plastic natural gas assets that are vulnerable to degradation in elevated temperature environments, and they need to urge operators to do more to evaluate and to mitigate these kinds of risks.

I commend the NTSB for this work which sheds clarity onto the devastating incident in my community and those impacted. Unfortunately, however, the findings are not particularly surprising. DuPont’s Aldyl A has a long and well-documented history of “poor performance histories relative to brittle-like cracking,” including several Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration warnings dating all the way back to 1999.

Concerningly, in just these past 2 years, there have been two deadly incidents involving Aldyl A in the United States: the first in my community that I am highlighting today, and the second in South Jordan, Utah, in November of 2024, which led to the death of a 15-year-old child, displaced families, and damaged many residences, as well. In its preliminary report for the South Jordan explosion, the NTSB again cited a leak in the Aldyl A natural gas main near the home.

Following the decades of unheeded Federal safety warnings, the many kitchen tables that now have a chair left empty, and the wholly inadequate response by pipeline operators and our Federal Government to prevent future incidents, this is why I am here urging that this committee ask itself this sobering question: How many more people need to die before we here in Congress act?

In the 118th Congress, I introduced a bipartisan piece of legislation with my Pennsylvania colleague, Representative Dan Meuser, to put an end to the safety risks associated with deadly Aldyl A plastic piping. The Aldyl A Hazard Reduction and Community Safety Act requires the proper documentation and the subsequent removal of Aldyl A in high-consequence areas. It also allows for considerations to minimize cost and service disruptions.

I stand very, very ready to work with the committee to reintroduce this critical legislation and urge for its inclusion in the pipe-

line safety reauthorization this Congress. In doing so, Congress will finally heed the decades-long warnings and greatly improve the safety of our pipeline distribution systems against the dangers of deadly Aldyl A.

I also encourage and urge the committee to use its oversight responsibilities to ensure that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, pipeline operators, and other implicated parties under the committee's jurisdiction expeditiously implement all of the NTSB's recommendations in its final report for the Palmer incident to help prevent future Aldyl A explosions.

Once again, I thank the committee for its attention to this very, very pressing issue, especially considering the troubling increase in deadly Aldyl A explosions over the recent years. And on behalf of my constituents who lost their lives and on behalf of my community, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

And I yield back.

[Ms. Houlahan's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Chrissy Houlahan, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to testify before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today.

As the Committee works to advance the reauthorization of the federal pipeline safety programs in the 119th Congress, I am participating in this hearing to call attention to the deadly safety risks associated with Aldyl A plastic piping.

Two years ago on March 24, 2023, a natural gas-fueled explosion in my district at the R.M. Palmer Company chocolate factory in West Reading, Pennsylvania tragically killed seven people, injured ten, and displaced three families from their homes.

Two months ago, the National Transportation Safety Board completed its final report of the incident and "determined that the probable cause of the explosion was degradation of a retired 1982 Aldyl A polyethylene service tee with a Delrin polyacetal insert that allowed natural gas to leak and migrate underground into the R.M. Palmer Company candy factory buildings, where it was ignited by an unknown source."

The Safety Board recommended the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration advise natural gas distribution pipeline operators to address the risk associated with Aldyl A service tees by replacing or remediating them. Furthermore, the NTSB found that operators may not be aware of the locations of their plastic natural gas assets vulnerable to degradation in elevated temperature environments, urging operators to do more to evaluate and mitigate risks.

I commend the NTSB for its work, which sheds clarity onto the devastating incident for my community and those impacted. Unfortunately, however, the findings are not particularly surprising.

DuPont's Aldyl A has a long and well-documented history of "poor performance histories relative to brittle-like cracking," including several Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration warnings dating back to 1999.

Concerningly, in just the past two years, there have been two deadly incidents involving Aldyl A in the United States. The first in my community and the second in South Jordan, Utah in November 2024, which led to the death of a 15-year-old child, displaced families, and damaged several residences. In its preliminary report for the South Jordan explosion, the NTSB cited a leak in the Aldyl A natural gas main near the home.

Following the decades of unheeded federal safety warnings, the many kitchen tables that now have a chair left empty, and the wholly inadequate response by pipeline operators and our federal government to prevent future incidents, I urge this Committee to ask itself the sobering question:

How many more people need to die before Congress acts?

In the 118th Congress, I introduced bipartisan legislation with my Pennsylvania colleague Representative Dan Meuser to put an end to the safety risks associated with deadly Aldyl A plastic piping. The Aldyl A Hazard Reduction and Community

Safety Act requires the proper documentation and subsequent removal of Aldyl A in high consequence areas. It also allows for considerations to minimize costs and service disruptions.

I stand ready to work with the Committee to reintroduce this critical legislation and urge for its inclusion in the pipeline safety reauthorization this Congress. In doing so, Congress will finally heed the decades long warnings and greatly improve the safety of our pipeline distribution systems against the dangers of the deadly Aldyl A material.

I also urge the Committee to use its oversight responsibilities to ensure that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, pipeline operators, and other implicated parties under the Committee's jurisdiction expeditiously implement all the National Transportation Safety Board's recommendations in its final report for the Palmer incident to help prevent a future Aldyl A explosion.

Once again, I thank the Committee for its attention to this pressing issue, especially considering the troubling increase in deadly Aldyl A explosions in recent years. On behalf of my constituents who lost their lives and my community, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

Thank you and I yield back.

Ms. KING-HINDS. Do any of the Members have any questions? None?

Thank you very much, Representative Houlahan.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you.

Ms. KING-HINDS. I now recognize Representative McGuire.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JOHN J. MCGUIRE III, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. MCGUIRE. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member, for having me here today to present my priorities for the 119th Congress in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. I am here today to talk about my very first bill I have introduced as a Member of Congress, the Agricultural and Forestry Hauling Efficiency Act.

Agriculture and forestry are two of the largest industries in the Commonwealth of Virginia, combining for over \$120 billion in annual economic impact and providing over 450,000 jobs. This bill allows the Commonwealth of Virginia to permit trucks up to 90,000 pounds on interstate highways that are hauling unprocessed agricultural crops and raw forest products. Virginia approved a maximum weight of 90,000 pounds for trucks hauling these products on non-interstate highways in 2015, but this does not apply to interstate highways.

This bill addresses a decade-long discrepancy between State and Federal law. It does not permit heavier trucks or increased weight limits; it simply enables trucks operating within State-approved weight limits to take safer, more efficient routes, bypassing winding rural roads that go through small communities, school areas, pedestrian zones, and residential districts.

Last year, Federal law was enacted that allowed the State of Mississippi to adopt the exact same policy. Additionally, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Minnesota, and New England States have similar authorization to allow agricultural product trucks permitted for higher weights to transit certain segments of the Federal interstate system. Allowing these trucks on interstates is safer, uses less fuel, leads to fewer emissions, better fuel mileage, less wear and tear on vehicles, and provides shorter routes.

Simply, it is safer for the community. We want to get the heavy trucks off of the backroads and onto the interstates with other heavy trucks. It is safer and more effective.

And I respectfully ask the committee to take into consideration this important legislation, and I want to thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak in front of you all today. And with that, I yield back.

[Mr. McGuire's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. John J. McGuire III, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for having me here today to present my priorities for the 119th Congress.

Agriculture and forestry are two of the largest industries in the Commonwealth of Virginia, combining for over \$120 billion in annual economic impact, and providing over 450,000 jobs.

I am here today to talk about the very first bill I introduced as a Member of Congress, the Agricultural and Forestry Hauling Efficiency Act.

This bill allows the Commonwealth of Virginia to permit trucks up to 90,000 pounds on interstate highways that are hauling unprocessed agricultural crops and raw forest products.

Virginia approved a maximum weight of 90,000 pounds for trucks hauling these products on non-interstate highways in 2015, but this does not apply to interstate highways.

This bill addresses a decade long discrepancy between state and federal law. It does not permit heavier trucks or increase weight limits; it simply enables trucks operating within state-approved weight limits to take safer, more efficient routes, bypassing winding rural roads that go through small communities, school areas, pedestrian zones, and residential districts.

Last year, federal law was enacted that allowed the State of Mississippi to adopt this same policy.

Additionally, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Minnesota, and New England states have similar authorization to allow agricultural product trucks permitted for higher weights to transit certain segments of the federal interstate system.

Allowing these trucks on interstates is safer, uses less fuel, leads to fewer emissions, better fuel mileage, less wear and tear on vehicles, and provides shorter routes.

I respectfully ask that the Committee take into consideration this important legislation, and I want to thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak in front of you all today. With that, I yield back.

Ms. KING-HINDS. Do any of the Members have any questions?

If none, thank you very much, Representative McGuire. I now recognize Representative Moskowitz.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JARED MOSKOWITZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Madam Chair, thanks for recognizing me today.

I came today to talk about this committee's draft bill, the FEMA Act of 2025, and I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for working on this.

Before I get there, I just wanted to give a little bit of my background. I am the only former emergency management director that was elected to Congress, and I was the emergency management director in Florida for a Republican Governor. I took my Democratic hat off for 2½ years and joined the DeSantis administration and ran that department and was solely in charge of the COVID response in the State of Florida.

Before that, I worked on the recovery from Hurricane Michael, which was in the panhandle. And it was President Trump and the Trump administration who gave Florida the resources it needed so that the people of the panhandle could recover. And without those resources from FEMA that President Trump approved and the administration gave to Florida, the panhandle would not have recovered and would not be what it is today.

I want to talk about a couple of issues of the FEMA Act of 2025.

First of all, it includes the FEMA Independence Act that I filed with Byron Donalds, which I support, which is to get FEMA out of Homeland Security. President Trump is right that FEMA needs reform. Let me say that again. President Trump is right that FEMA needs reform. We have known that in the emergency management industry for some time. One of those pieces of reform is it has got to get out of Homeland. Homeland is too big, it is too bureaucratic, and they have FEMA running all of the grants for all of the agencies, doing immigration stuff that they shouldn't be doing, and FEMA has gotten away from its core mission, as a result, of focusing on response and recovery.

The second is, we can block grant some of this money, and I have that bill with Tim Burchett in the House, and some of that is in the FEMA Act of 2025. We can give States more responsibility. We can send money down. States can do that.

But I also came to issue a warning. I am deeply concerned about what Secretary Noem is doing at Homeland on FEMA. And I have got to be honest, I think she is doing a disservice to the President. In the last 5 months, what she has done under her leadership with FEMA, okay, is take FEMA, which needed reform—the President was right about that—and turn it into Newark Airport. I am worried that FEMA is going to fail this summer.

If a hurricane came into Louisiana, Alabama, or Mississippi, those States will go bankrupt without FEMA aid. Right now, the Secretary has all FEMA aid paused, even ones that are under previous Presidential declarations, money that Congress has appropriated. I am worried that those States—Mississippi, Alabama—right, they don't have the same resources as a Florida or a Texas, even though the grants in Florida and Texas are also paused.

Let me say this. Florida and Texas might be able to survive one hurricane this summer without having to cut healthcare or education or their DOT budget, but not two. If Texas or Florida got a double hit, which has happened all the time, they will have to raid their DOT budget, their education budget, and their healthcare budget just to survive.

FEMA also provides resources. Now, they don't own those resources; they coordinate those Federal resources. Most of them are DOT resources. Without FEMA's ability to do that, States that don't have those resources like the States I said—Mississippi, Alabama, right, Louisiana—if something comes in from the Gulf of America it is going to be very tough for those States to respond.

What about tornado alley? Those States don't have it. Kentucky, Oklahoma, they go bankrupt.

And we have not had an earthquake since the 1990s, thank goodness, but I can tell you right now, FEMA will fail, based on what the Secretary has done to that Department.

And so, the President is right. FEMA does need reform. I know this committee is working on that. I want to work with the committee and the chairman on FEMA reform. But we have to save FEMA. We can make it smaller. We can make it faster, right? We can do those things. But if the idea is we don't need a FEMA anymore, and that is what the Secretary has said, I can tell you the results are going to be catastrophic, and it is going to be mostly for red States, based on their geographic territory and their financial ability.

And so, I appreciate the opportunity. I support the President creating the task force that he has created to try to come up with FEMA ideas. I look forward to them meeting. I believe those meetings are going to start soon, and we will look forward to their recommendations and working with Congress.

But with that, Madam Chairwoman, I stand ready to answer any and all questions. Thank you.

[Mr. Moskowitz's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Jared Moskowitz, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee. As the Representative for Florida's 23rd Congressional District—and the only former statewide Emergency Management Director to ever serve in Congress—I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about how we strengthen FEMA and improve the way our country prepares for, responds to, and recovers from disasters.

I want to thank the Committee for holding this important hearing and drafting a FEMA reform package that reflects several proposals that I have long supported, including giving states more flexibility in how they administer disaster assistance and restoring FEMA as an independent agency. I believe that these reforms would help cut red tape, improve coordination, and ensure that help reaches communities faster when they need it most.

These reforms come at a critical moment. The truth is, disasters are becoming more frequent, more destructive, and more expensive. Communities across the country, from coastal regions to the rural heartland, are facing events that strain emergency management systems and complicate recovery. FEMA must be equipped to support a range of needs, from states that can lead their own response to those that need more direct assistance.

Unfortunately, some are calling to abolish FEMA entirely. That cannot be the path forward. FEMA isn't perfect—no agency is—but we don't fix that by walking away. We fix it by making the agency better. That's why I'm encouraged that the reform package we're discussing today reflects several proposals I've long supported—reforms that would make FEMA faster, more efficient, and more effective.

The worst thing Congress could do right now is dismantle the only federal agency whose sole mission is to respond when Americans are at their most vulnerable. Eliminating FEMA would force states to take on disasters alone, regardless of whether they have the resources or capacity to do so. It would slow recovery, raise costs, and leave families without the support they need.

It goes back to what I said: the rate of disasters isn't just increasing—it's also intensifying, and the facts back it up. In 2023 alone, the United States faced 28 separate billion-dollar disasters, the highest number ever recorded, totaling more than \$91.3 billion in damages.^{1,2} Events like these aren't concentrated in one region, either—they strike nearly every part of the country, and the damage is such that communities simply can't recover alone.

We saw it in Hawaii, when wildfires tore through Maui, decimating the historic town of Lahaina in what became the deadliest U.S. wildfires in more than 100 years. Nearly 100 people were killed, and thousands of families lost their homes and businesses at incredible emotional and financial cost—more than \$5.7 billion in damage.^{2,3}

We saw it in my home state of Florida, when Hurricane Ian made landfall as a Category 4 storm, flattening coastal communities, cutting power to millions, and causing nearly \$120 billion in damage.¹ It was one of the costliest storms on record.

And of course, during COVID-19, our country experienced our first-ever nationwide Major Disaster Declaration. All 50 states, all five territories, and the District of Columbia were under active declarations at the same time.⁴ It was the first time a public health emergency triggered a response under the Stafford Act.⁵

These are just a few of the many examples, but in all of them, who showed up to help? It was FEMA—working alongside state and local responders—that helped provide shelter, coordinate aid, and begin the long but necessary recovery process.

In the years after Ian, FEMA provided \$1.15 billion in direct grants to help nearly 400,000 Florida households repair and rebuild, and another \$2.3 billion to local communities for debris cleanup and infrastructure repair.⁶ In total, federal support for Ian's recovery topped \$10.2 billion.⁶ In Hawaii, FEMA is still around almost two years later, offering direct housing assistance. And during COVID, the agency helped deliver billions of units of PPE, supported field hospitals and vaccine sites, and provided more than \$125 billion in emergency aid to state and local governments.^{4,5} If there was ever any doubt about FEMA's importance, COVID made it clear.^{4,5} FEMA delivered the national response that the pandemic required.

All of this to say, this is not a regional issue. It is national. As more and more Americans live in high-risk areas and the climate continues to change, the scale and costs of these disasters will keep rising. And FEMA is the only federal agency with the expertise and infrastructure to coordinate response and recovery at this magnitude.

But FEMA can only do that work if it has the structure, authority, and agility to meet the challenges we face. That's why I introduced the FEMA Independence Act—to restore FEMA as a stand-alone agency with a direct line to the President. I'm honored that this Committee included that reform in the broader package. It's a commonsense step that reflects what many of us already knew from experience: FEMA needs the ability to act quickly, cut through bureaucracy, and lead when disaster strikes.

While that is an important step in the right direction, I also believe we should continue exploring ways to give states more flexibility in how they administer disaster recovery programs. Just last week, I introduced the Disaster Housing Flexibility Act and the Disaster Response Flexibility Act to allow states to opt into a block grant model for housing and public assistance. These proposals are rooted in my experience managing state block grant programs during my time as the Director of Florida's Division of Emergency Management, where getting resources out the door quickly made a real difference.

These kinds of reforms are not about shifting responsibility. They are about recognizing that some states have the capacity and readiness to move faster—and we should empower them to do so when appropriate. A voluntary block grant framework would allow FEMA to focus more of its capacity on states that need the most federal support, while giving states with strong emergency management infrastructure more say in their own recovery. Not only would it reduce administrative burden and increase efficiency, it would also give states the flexibility to tailor assistance in ways that make the best use of available resources. It is a flexible, scalable model worth considering as we look ahead.

FEMA is not a luxury. It is a lifeline. Whether it is hurricanes in Florida or Texas, wildfires in Hawaii or California, floods in Vermont or Iowa, tornadoes in Kentucky or Mississippi, or heat waves in Nevada or Arizona, FEMA shows up with the people and resources to help. That work does not replace state or local efforts—it supports and strengthens them when the scale exceeds what any one community can manage.

That is why proposals to abolish FEMA are so dangerous. Eliminating the only federal agency solely focused on disaster response would not make our communities safer or recover faster. It would do the opposite. We should be improving FEMA, not tearing it down—and that is exactly what this reform package begins to do.

You all have taken a critical step forward by restoring FEMA's independence and exploring new ways to cut red tape and strengthen the federal-state partnership. I appreciate the Committee's work to advance these reforms, and I look forward to continuing the conversation about how we make FEMA stronger, smarter, and more responsive for the challenges ahead.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

¹ Wu, Shuang-Ye. "Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters Broke U.S. Record in 2023, NOAA Says." PBS NewsHour, January 10, 2024. <https://www.pbs.org/>

[newshour/science/a-record-28-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-struck-the-u-s-in-2023-noaa](https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/12/us/weather-climate-disasters-struck-the-u-s-in-2023-noaa/index.html)

²National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI). *U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather & Climate Disasters 1980–2024*. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/events.pdf>.

³Blake, Mike, and Marco Garcia. “Maui Wildfires Deadliest in Century as Death Toll Hits 93.” *Reuters*, August 13, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/death-toll-maui-fires-hits-least-80-damages-billions-dollars-2023-08-12/>.

⁴Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). *FEMA Led Historic Pandemic Response, Supported Record Number of Disasters in 2020*. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, January 11, 2021. <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20210111/fema-led-historic-pandemic-response-supported-record-number-disasters-2020>.

⁵U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Disaster Relief Fund: Lessons Learned from COVID-19 Could Improve FEMA’s Estimates*. GAO-24-106676. Washington, D.C.: Government Accountability Office, July 9, 2024. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106676>.

⁶Federal Emergency Management Agency. “Hurricane Ian: Two Years into Recovery.” *FEMA.gov*, September 19, 2024. <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20250122/hurricane-ian-two-years-recovery>.

Ms. KING-HINDS. Do any of the Members have any questions?
If none, thank you, Representative Moskowitz.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you.

Mr. FONG [presiding]. The Chair now recognizes Representative Moore.

[Pause.]

Mr. FONG. Would you turn on your mic, I believe?

Mr. MOORE. Let me start—I will start over there.

TESTIMONY OF HON. TIM MOORE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. MOORE OF NORTH CAROLINA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you and the other committee members for this hearing today before Transportation and Infrastructure to hear from Members from around the country.

I represent the 14th District of North Carolina, and I can tell you that the Charlotte-Gastonia metro is one of the fastest growing areas in our Nation. As western North Carolina continues to grow, so do the demands on our local infrastructure, like so many other locations. That is why, actually, the first bill that I filed this year was H.R. 1333, which would designate U.S. Highway 74 as a future interstate. This segment would stretch from Interstate 26 in Columbus, North Carolina, to Interstate 85 in Kings Mountain, North Carolina.

For many of my constituents—and frankly, for folks that travel from around the country—U.S. 74 is a heavily traveled route for commuting, commerce, and daily life. Upgrading U.S. 74 to interstate status will bring long-overdue improvements. This designation will open this corridor for new economic development, attract businesses, and create more opportunities for western North Carolina. And the future interstate designation will allow the North Carolina DOT to place corresponding signs along the corridor that runs through Polk, Rutherford, Cleveland, and Gaston Counties and will ensure the road is brought up to interstate standards.

The reason this is important is one of our counties, Rutherford County, is one of the few counties in our State—and the only one

in my district—that does not show an interstate within its county lines. This designation of what essentially is an interstate—it already functions that way, it has exits, controlled access, all of that—is expected to boost economic opportunity in this county while also improving regional connectivity.

Some of you may know when a company is looking to expand somewhere, on their site selection, they want to know how close are you to an interstate. And it may be an interstate-quality road, but if it doesn't have that magic blue and red, it doesn't count as interstate for it. So it is a way that can sometimes disqualify areas. That is what has happened in Rutherford County. And Mr. Chairman, I would submit it has probably happened in other locales around the country, and it is something—it is an easy fix that we could do to help regions like that.

But I am certainly looking forward to working with this committee on that, but really moving forward with something even more important. I am sure you all heard about Hurricane Helene that really ravaged western North Carolina. And I can tell you that, beyond infrastructure improvements, disaster relief remains the top issue for western North Carolina. Like I say, it has been a little less than a year ago when Hurricane Helene came in and did significant damage, but there has been progress since President Trump entered office. There is still debris to clear, rebuilding to do, but the pace has picked up, and we are very grateful for that.

We have also seen that the leftover debris has proven to be dangerous, as it acts as a fuel for wildfire. Some of you may have followed the news and saw about all the wildfires that we had a couple months ago. And I will just say that the bureaucracy at FEMA, particularly in the past, had made getting the debris cleared very difficult. But that is not the only issue at FEMA. We recognize there needs to be overhaul, and I look forward to seeing this committee take that up as I know the President has put a lot of effort into that.

And I've got to say, since the first of the year, FEMA really has stepped up their game and has done an even better job at debris removal, as well as other things. We know in the last administration, FEMA spent, I think it was, \$1.4 billion on migrant housing, transportation services, instead of getting those dollars where they needed to be to take care of folks who were dealing with all this hurricane damage that we had.

So I am glad that the President is putting a focus on that, is reforming FEMA, and is working to get those resources delivered to western North Carolina. And I tell you, I am looking forward to working with the administration as well as this committee and the rest of our colleagues here in Congress to make sure the Federal Government is prepared to help States respond swiftly to any disaster and to prioritize American families instead of getting in the way.

States also need more freedom to take the lead in their disaster response, because they know the needs of their constituents better than any bureaucrat in Washington, DC, or anywhere else. It means faster relief. We have to promote efficiency, transparency, and accountability within disaster relief funds across our Federal

Government and ensure that taxpayer dollars go directly to helping families recover and rebuild.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[Mr. Moore of North Carolina's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Tim Moore, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina

Thank you Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for hosting this Member Day.

The Charlotte-Gastonia metro is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. As western North Carolina continues to grow, so do the demands on local infrastructure. That's why the first bill I introduced was H.R. 1333 to designate U.S. Highway 74 as a future interstate. This segment would stretch from I-26 in Columbus, North Carolina to I-85 in Kings Mountain, North Carolina.

For many of my constituents, US 74 is a heavily traveled route for commuting, commerce, and daily life. Upgrading US 74 to future interstate status will bring long-overdue improvements. This designation will open this corridor for new economic development, attract businesses, and create more opportunities for western North Carolina.

The future interstate designation will allow the North Carolina Department of Transportation to place corresponding signs along the corridor that runs through Polk, Rutherford, Cleveland, and Gaston counties and will ensure the road is brought up to interstate standards.

Currently, Rutherford County does not have an interstate within its county lines. This designation is expected to boost economic opportunity in each county while improving regional connectivity.

I look forward to working with the Members of the committee to bring needed infrastructure improvements to western North Carolina.

Beyond infrastructure improvements, disaster relief remains the top issue for western North Carolina. Less than a year ago, communities across the Southeast were devastated by Hurricane Helene. Debris still litters the ground in western North Carolina.

This debris poses a wildfire risk, and we've already had a few wildfires in Polk County this year.

I wanted to reiterate that I am prepared to work with the Members of this committee to advance legislation that seeks action on this issue and ensures debris cleanup is completed before next year's wildfire season.

Finally, I wanted to finish off by commending the committee and the administration's efforts in working to empower states with disaster response. I look forward to working closely with Members to ensure we can get this reform bill to the finish line.

With that, I yield back my time.

Mr. FONG. Thank you, Representative Moore, for your testimony.

I want to turn it over to the committee if anyone has any questions.

Seeing none, thank you for your testimony, Representative Moore.

Mr. MOORE OF NORTH CAROLINA. Have a good day.

Mr. FONG. Thank you.

I believe we are still waiting for a few Members to make their way to the committee, so in the meantime, the committee shall stand in recess, subject to the call of the chair.

[Recess.]

Mr. FONG. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will reconvene.

With that, Representative Kaptur, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your testimony.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MARCY KAPTUR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO**

Ms. KAPTUR. Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, who is not here right now, and members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today.

I rise to share the priorities of Ohio's Ninth Congressional District, which stretches along Lake Erie's south shore from Toledo west to Indiana, east to Sandusky, Ohio, and then south to Fremont.

For our communities, many of them industrial, agricultural, port-centered, and working-class, surface transportation isn't an abstract policy. It is about American economic progress, jobs, safety, mobility, and quality of life.

I strongly support the Transportation Alternatives Program, which provides \$1.38 billion annually through fiscal year 2026. In cities like the largest one that I represent, Toledo and then Sandusky, these funds are building safer sidewalks, bike paths, and ADA-accessible routes, helping connect neighborhoods long left behind. These investments aren't just about transportation. They are about health and workforce development in the Great Lakes nation. We are all along the southern rim of Lake Erie, a lake we share with Canada.

I also want to commend—and by the way, the transportation modernization that needs to occur with Canada is a work in progress. Shortly, the Gordie Howe Bridge will be dedicated, and we are very, very excited about that, but we need to have other improvements on the transportation front, because Canada is our largest trading partner.

I want to commend the committee's continued support for RAISE grants, funded at approximately \$1.5 billion per year. In northwest Ohio, RAISE has helped unlock long-stalled infrastructure projects, from reconnecting divided communities to strengthening multimodal access. These competitive grants are vital for mid-sized cities with ambitious plans, but limited tax bases.

Another critical tool is the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, authorized at \$200 million annually. This program supports safe, connected bike and pedestrian networks, which are essential in communities where car ownership is not universal. From east Toledo to rural Ottawa County, these investments help residents get to school, work, and healthcare reliably and safely through protected spaces, including Toledo's number-one-ranked Metroparks in our Nation, for which we are so proud.

Equally urgent is investment in rail connector routes—we are heavy on rail—and short line infrastructure. The CRISI program, funded at \$1 billion in fiscal year 2024 and over \$5 billion through fiscal year 2026, for us is essential.

In Toledo, upgrading rail links to our port, thriving port, the busiest port on the lower Great Lakes, and industrial parks would improve freight efficiency, reduce highway wear, and strengthen our manufacturing competitiveness.

In addition, connecting passenger rails around the Great Lakes is an achievable dream.

Finally, I would urge this committee to continue its work to incentivize cities and localities to make the necessary investments

for passenger rail in our region. I wish the major public fleets that are necessary to move people and cargo and their valuable repair and maintenance facilities across our Nation could be more cohesive.

In other words, where we have large numbers of public fleets, to connect that opportunity to workforce development for mechanical technicians that we dearly need in our country. We are over 1 million short already. So we have a serious shortage of training sites for workforce development, for trained technicians and mechanics, and too many repair garages with circulation systems of the past era. We need healthy garages in which people can work and be trained. With your committee's leadership, I believe in a new era of safer, cleaner maintenance facilities that can repair firetrucks, police cars, municipal vehicles, ambulances, street sweepers, garbage trucks, lawnmowers, and equipment that keep communities serviced. And I would really value the opportunity to develop a more intensive dialog on that point.

Taken together, these programs are not just line items, they are lifelines, and they connect our people to opportunity, support local economies, and help us build communities that are safer, greener, and more inclusive.

Thank you for your leadership, Mr. Chairman and Members, and for giving communities like mine a seat at the table. I look forward to working with you to continue delivering for the American people.

I yield back, and thank you.

[Ms. Kaptur's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Marcy Kaptur, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee—thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I rise to share the priorities of Ohio's 9th Congressional District, which stretches along Lake Erie from Toledo to Sandusky. For our communities—many of them industrial, port-centered, and working-class—surface transportation isn't abstract policy. It's about jobs, safety, mobility, and quality of life.

I strongly support the Transportation Alternatives Program, which provides \$1.38 Billion annually through FY2026. In cities like Toledo and Sandusky, these funds are building safer sidewalks, bike paths, and ADA-accessible routes—helping connect neighborhoods long left behind. These investments aren't just about transportation; they are about health, equity, and opportunity.

I also want to commend this Committee's continued support for RAISE Grants, funded at approximately \$1.5 Billion per year. In Northwest Ohio, RAISE has helped unlock long-stalled infrastructure projects—from reconnecting divided communities to strengthening multimodal access. These competitive grants are vital for mid-sized cities with ambitious plans but limited tax bases.

Another critical tool is the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, authorized at \$200 Million annually. This program supports safe, connected bike and pedestrian networks, which are essential in communities where car ownership is not universal. From East Toledo to rural Ottawa County, these investments help residents get to school, work, and health care reliably and safely.

Equally urgent is investment in rail connector routes and short line infrastructure. The CRISI program, funded at \$1 Billion in FY2024 and over \$5 Billion through FY2026, is essential for regions like mine. In Toledo, upgrading the rail links to our port and industrial parks would improve freight efficiency, reduce highway wear, and strengthen our manufacturing competitiveness.

Taken together, these programs are not just line items—they're lifelines. They connect our people to opportunity, support local economies, and help us build communities that are safer, greener, and more inclusive.

Thank you for your leadership and for giving communities like mine a seat at the table. I look forward to working with you to continue delivering for the American people.

Mr. FONG. Thank you very much.

Do any Members on the dais have any questions?

Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. The Chair now recognizes Representative Fitzgerald.

You have 5 minutes for your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF HON. SCOTT FITZGERALD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, for allowing me to testify today about bicyclist and pedestrian safety.

On August 25, 2022, Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, wife, proud mother of two boys, and 17-year U.S. Foreign Service officer, was tragically killed when a flatbed truck collided with her while riding a bicycle along an unprotected bike lane in Bethesda, Maryland. Sarah's tragic death highlights the need to make our roadways safer for all who travel them, specifically bicyclists and pedestrians.

Currently, Highway Safety Improvement Program funds are not able to be used for the connection of two or more segments of existing bicyclist or pedestrian infrastructure. While a reasonable interpretation of a highway safety improvement project would include connecting existing bicyclists and pedestrian infrastructure, the absence of these funds for these projects puts America's cyclists and pedestrians in an unnecessary danger.

As this committee works on the surface transportation reauthorization package, I ask that you provide clarifying language to allow Highway Safety Improvement Program funds to be used for the protection of vulnerable road users when two existing projects are being connected. This will make our roads safer for all who travel them and prevent future tragedies like the loss of Sarah from happening again. Thank you.

[Mr. Fitzgerald's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Scott Fitzgerald, a Representative in Congress from the State of Wisconsin

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larson, and members of the committee for allowing me to testify today about bicyclist and pedestrian safety.

On August 25, 2022, Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, a wife, proud mother of two boys, and 17-year U.S. foreign service officer was tragically killed when a flatbed truck collided and crushed her while she was riding a bicycle along an unprotected bike lane in Bethesda, Maryland.

Sarah's tragic death highlights the need to make our roadways safer for all who travel them, specifically bicyclists and pedestrians.

Currently, Highway Safety Improvement Program, or HSIP, funds are not able to be used for the connection of two or more segments of existing bicyclist or pedestrian infrastructure. While a reasonable interpretation of a highway safety improvement project would include connecting existing bicyclist and pedestrian infrastructure, the absence of HSIP funds for these projects puts America's cyclists and pedestrians in unnecessary danger.

As this committee works on the Surface Transportation Reauthorization package, I ask that you provide clarifying language to allow Highway Safety Improvement Program funds to be used for the protection of Vulnerable Road Users when two existing projects are being connected. This will make our roads safer for all who

travel them and prevent future tragedies like the loss of Sarah Debbink Langenkamp from happening again.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this important issue today. I look forward to continuing work with the committee on transportation safety.

Mr. FONG. Thank you very much.

Do any Members want to ask any questions?

Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

The committee shall stand in recess, subject to the call of the chair.

[Recess.]

Mr. FONG. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will reconvene.

I want to thank all the Members for participating. This concludes our hearing for today. The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:11 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Prepared Statement of Hon. Gabe Amo, a Representative in Congress from the State of Rhode Island

Chairman Sam Graves, Ranking Member Rick Larsen, and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure thank you for the opportunity to share the priorities of Rhode Island's First Congressional district with you as the Committee develops its robust legislative agenda for the 119th Congress.

Decades of underfunding at the federal level have left Rhode Island's infrastructure needing improvement, earning the state an overall C- rating from the American Society of Civil Engineers. Roughly 160 bridges in the state are in poor condition.

The historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law attempted to address many of these long-standing challenges. As of 2023, the law helped deliver \$1.8 billion in meaningful investments to meet some of the infrastructure needs of the Ocean State.

These investments are strengthening our state's transportation systems, addressing the 15% of bridges rated in poor condition, reconstructing ports, building charging stations, and enhancing resiliency.

These projects are already enhancing the quality of life for countless Rhode Islanders and all those who travel through our state.

This historic law was crucial in Rhode Island securing \$221 million in federal funds to rebuild the Washington Bridge, a project that is a top priority for my constituents. Every dollar secured for the Washington Bridge directly reduces the burden on Rhode Island's residents, businesses, and visitors. While the state is still working to finalize rebuilding the bridge, I hope the federal government will be committed to getting it done swiftly.

As you continue building on this progress, I urge you to consider including the following priorities.

First, research has demonstrated that advanced construction materials can drive innovation and sustainability, significantly reducing the environmental impact of our infrastructure.¹

Rhode Island's composites industry is key to promoting sustainability and innovation in infrastructure. This growing sector provides essential support to industries such as aerospace, automotive, consumer goods, marine, transportation, and more.

Last Congress I cosponsored the Innovative Materials for America's Growth and Infrastructure Newly Expanded (IMAGINE) Act to support research and deployment of innovative construction materials, further improve transportation networks and extend the lifespan of critical infrastructure.

I urge the Committee to continue championing forward-thinking strategies that bolster America's competitive edge innovation while securing a stronger, more resilient future.

Second, continued investment in transportation research and technology enables Rhode Island and other states to develop innovative solutions, upgrade infrastructure, and advance modernization efforts for the benefit of future generations.

I urge you to maintain the State Planning and Research (SPR) program in its current formula-based configuration. Additionally, I urge the continuation of the 25 percent set-aside for research, development, and technology transfer activities. These provisions are key for enabling the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to drive innovation and enhance transportation technologies.

I also support preserving the current level of authorizations for federal Research, Technology & Development programs at a level consistent with the proportion of funding already appropriated to ensure continued progress in infrastructure resilience, efficiency, and modernization.

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385748997_Advanced_Materials_and_Construction_Techniques_Innovation_and_Sustainability

Third, like many other states, Rhode Island depends on long-term planning and projections for future capital improvements to ensure infrastructure projects are executed efficiently.

However, without stable and predictable funding, states cannot confidently commit to these long-term investments.

For example, a project in Rhode Island remained in the design phase for 30 years before construction finally began.

To address the ongoing challenges faced by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, I urge the Committee to prioritize formula funding as a reliable and consistent resource.

Underscoring the need to have stable funding, a \$221 million MEGA-INFRA grant for the Washington Bridge was held up by the Administration's funding pause. This grant was fairly awarded to Rhode Island last year, having been evaluated and selected in a competitive process.

I worked with my colleagues and those in the administration to get these funds released so Rhode Island can move forward with this critical infrastructure project.

But any delay to transportation funding threatens to impact a wide range of projects in my state and the creation of good paying jobs—ultimately impacting the entire economy.

I strongly urge the Committee to include language in future legislation to ensure the timely distribution of obligated grant funding and any remaining federal transportation funding previously awarded to states like Rhode Island.

Another example is the abrupt suspension of the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program, which created major setbacks for Rhode Island that had already committed resources and begun implementation. Without expected federal funding, projects aimed at accelerating the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure face uncertainty.

Rhode Island was the first state in the country to complete Phase I by installing fast chargers, making significant strides in establishing charging networks that would transition to more sustainable and resilient transportation systems.

Congress authorized this vital Electric Vehicle infrastructure funding and it must be restored without further delay.

Fourth, as the Ocean State, Rhode Island faces significant threats from rising sea levels, with projections indicating an increase of up to 10 feet by 2100. This crisis endangers all infrastructure sectors, requiring immediate action to safeguard transportation networks and critical assets.

According to the Rhode Island Statewide Climate Resilience Action Strategy, a one percent storm surge could flood 337 miles of public roads and impact 163 bridges statewide.

To mitigate these risks, I urge you to prioritize resilient infrastructure investments, such as the Promoting Resilience Operations for Transformative, Efficiency, and Cost saving Transportation (PROTECT) grant program.

Rhode Island was awarded two PROTECT grants, one \$750,000 planning grant to study and make resiliency investments to mitigate climate change vulnerabilities and another \$26 million for a construction grant to implement stormwater solutions in more than 100 locations around the state.

These funds have not been obligated and are currently being held up by the Administration. This delay threatens Rhode Island's ability to safeguard our infrastructure against climate threats.

I urge the Committee to expand and provide high authorization levels for the PROTECT Act because these funds support Rhode Island's coastal resilience.

Lastly, I would like to elevate the pain our community still feels after the Flight 5342 crash at National Airport. Two of my constituents—Christine and Spencer Lane of Barrington—lives were tragically lost.

The cracks in our aviation infrastructure have been ignored for far too long. This tragedy should have never occurred. It must never happen again.

As Doug Lane, who lost his wife and son, recently wrote “What happened that day was not an isolated incident. It was the result of preventable systemic failures that still exist.”

We need to ensure the National Transportation Safety Board recommendations are swiftly implemented and we have robust reviews of the events that took place to implement prevention policies.

We must enact real, lasting reform, modernize our outdated safety protocols and improve air traffic control staffing.

I will commit to working with anyone—families of the victims, Democrats and Republicans, and leaders on this Committee to honor the memories of those lost—not with words alone, but with action to prevent anyone else from suffering from this type of tragedy.

I appreciate the opportunity to share Rhode Island's transportation priorities with you today, and I look forward to working alongside the Committee to advance policies that build a stronger, more resilient future for our communities. Thank you.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, a Representative in Congress from the State of Georgia

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee,

As the sole Representative of the entire Georgia coast, home to the nation's third-busiest container port in Savannah and the busiest auto and machinery terminal in Brunswick, your work in this committee is very important to me and my constituents. I am especially appreciative of the committee's ability to complete the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 and its inclusion of an expedited study for the deepening of the Savannah harbor.

As you and your staff begin to craft new Water Resources Development legislation, I would encourage you to find new ways to streamline and improve the Corps' project management process, particularly regarding cost estimation, contracting and dredging plan flexibility. The Port of Brunswick, the busiest port in America for the import and export of autos and machinery, has faced three bid busts in a single year—two for the Brunswick Harbor's annual Operations and Maintenance and one for the Brunswick Harbor Modifications Project. Each of these bids was primarily due to the Corps' inability to estimate current market costs for dredging and therefore underestimated the necessary funding capability. For example, the Brunswick Harbor Modifications Project was estimated to cost \$15.1 million when it was authorized in WRDA 22. Today, three years later, the Corps' estimate is \$27.6 million—an 83% increase. Similarly, bids for the harbor maintenance twice exceeded the allowable limits set by the Corps' cost estimation and were therefore not awardable.

Cost estimation is not the only issue creating this problem. Despite the Brunswick Harbor Modifications Project's new \$27 million estimated price tag, this is considered a small navigation project. Giving the Corps a little more flexibility when awarding smaller projects would enable them to get these projects awarded and therefore completed sooner so the nation can begin enjoying the positive economic benefits they deliver.

Lastly, the Corps has either been unwilling or unable to draft alternative dredging plans for Brunswick Harbor maintenance. Focusing only on the use of one type of dredge—which is limited by a three-and-a-half month annual environmental window—the Corps has not been able to maintain this important harbor to its full width and depth in over fifteen years. This lack of flexibility has reduced the harbor's positive economic benefits to the nation by reducing the times that ships can traverse the harbor each day. Allowing for multiple dredge types in the Corps' dredging plan would enable the Corps to fully maintain the harbor and return those missing benefits to American consumers and businesses.

Aside from WRDA, I would encourage the committee to authorize the Port Infrastructure Development Program fully as it considers the Surface Transportation Re-authorization bill and expand the permissible uses of the Capital Construction Fund to include cargo handling equipment and related infrastructure for marine terminal operators. If we want to return manufacturing to our country, America's port infrastructure must remain globally competitive. These programs help port facilities to fund critical projects to rehabilitate docks, expand terminals and more.

Thank you again for the consideration of my remarks. I appreciate the committee's time and continued efforts on behalf of our nation's infrastructure.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Ed Case, a Representative in Congress from the State of Hawaii

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my priorities for matters under your Committee's jurisdiction for the 119th Congress. In particular, I ask for your continued support of the U.S. Coast Guard.

My home state of Hawai'i relies heavily on and has benefited greatly from the presence of the Coast Guard. We appreciate the Coast Guard's direct support of Hawai'i residents, both generally and through its District 14 headquartered in Honolulu, not only performance of its statutory missions like search and rescue and

maritime environmental protection, but also for its indirect support through its presence beyond Hawai'i throughout the Indo-Pacific.

The Pacific Islands region has long held strategic importance to the United States. These island nations and other jurisdictions are located in the vast expanse of ocean between Hawai'i and New Zealand and control a shared exclusive economic zone larger than the surface area of Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) combined. The battles fought in the Pacific Islands during the Second World War showed us the importance of the region. Following the war, the United States became administrator of the United Nations-designated Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In that time, our nation rapidly advanced relationships with many Pacific Islands countries and jurisdictions.

However, our engagement unfortunately waned over time and suffered from decades of insufficient attention, a situation the pacing challenge of the People's Republic of China has been only too willing to exploit. This includes the PRC's Coast Guard, which falls under the People's Armed Police, a paramilitary force that reports to the PRC's Central Military Commission, as well as its maritime militia, also a projection of its armed forces.

Our Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to advance our engagement and has an important national security role in the face of rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. It is critical to our nation's effort to counter the PRC through strengthening presence and partnerships, focusing on maritime law enforcement and addressing "gray zone" tactics through capacity building, joint patrols and other means. In addition, the Coast Guard has a respected track record of assisting partner nations, especially the island nations of the Pacific, with their real-world challenges, from maritime domain awareness, exclusive economic zone and fisheries protection (including through joint shiprider agreements) high seas fisheries treaty enforcement, transnational law enforcement, search and rescue and humanitarian aid.

The white hulls of the Coast Guard are a symbol of the U.S. humanitarian and a soft power presence. It is widely accepted and welcomed throughout the Indo-Pacific, and leaders in the region have consistently requested a larger Coast Guard presence.

Yet, despite its current and especially potential contributions to our Indo-Pacific engagement, the reality is that the Coast Guard does not have the full suite of authorities and resources to conduct its expanding mission.

As one response, to enhance the Coast Guard's role, in the 118th Congress, Congressman Trent Kelly and I introduced the Pacific Ready Coast Guard Act, which we plan to reintroduce this week. This bill would help our Coast Guard transform into one that is ready to take on the unique challenges and opportunities that the Pacific region poses in this Pacific century. Specifically, it would establish a Coast Guard-led Center of Expertise in Indo-Pacific Maritime Governance. Its mission would be to work with partner nations to provide and facilitate education and research on maritime governance best practices, including how to build critical regional state capacity.

Additionally, our bill would also require the Coast Guard to issue an annual plan for its operations in the Indo-Pacific, evaluate the feasibility of a standing Indo-Pacific Maritime Group to conduct humanitarian and law enforcement missions in the Indo-Pacific, review the feasibility of establishing more forward operating bases in the Pacific and advise on expanding Coast Guard attaché positions in U.S. embassies in the region.

The Pacific Ready Coast Guard Act will further focus on specific areas where Coast Guard operations and resources in the Indo-Pacific should be updated and expanded to match the Coast Guard's expanded mission and to fully realize its potential contributions to our increased engagement throughout this critical region. I ask for the Committee's consideration and support of our measure.

I sincerely appreciate this Committee's consideration of the bill and the Coast Guard's presence in the critical Indo-Pacific region.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Sean Casten, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Illinois**

Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time today to hear about my priorities.

I join you today to discuss an issue that has become increasingly important to me: mental health care access for pilots and air traffic controllers, and to urge the committee to consider a bipartisan bill which Rep. Stauber and I have introduced to address this issue, the Mental Health in Aviation Act.

In my time in Congress, two families in the Chicagoland area have come to me to share stories of losing their adult children—aspiring aviators in training to become pilots—to suicide. As I began to explore this issue, I found an arcane medical review process that limits the ability of aviators to seek the care they need.

As it stands, pilots and air traffic controllers who seek mental health care are unfairly penalized by a system that perpetuates a culture of silence. While aviation professionals are mandated to report if they seek mental health care, once they take that step, they are faced with delays, confusion, and overbroad regulation in the process of returning to work. This often means that relatively minor mental health concerns result in long wait times and derailed careers for safe and well-trained pilots and air traffic controllers, which exacerbate care avoidance that is rooted in fear for their livelihoods.

In December 2023, the Federal Aviation Administration recognized the need to reform its current policies and established an Aviation Rulemaking Committee (aka the ARC) to identify barriers to mental health care for aviators and present recommendations to the FAA to address these challenges. To address these barriers, the ARC coalesced unanimously around a list of 24 recommendations to eliminate some of the main barriers to care—including allowing pilots to receive talk therapy without facing bureaucratic red tape, creating a non-punitive pathway for revealing past mental health care, and reducing the use of expensive and time-consuming neurocognitive testing.

I was glad to see this committee focus on this issue by including the implementation of the ARC's consensus recommendations in Section 411 of last year's FAA Reauthorization.

Our bill, the Mental Health in Aviation Act, builds on the work of the ARC and the Reauthorization by requiring the implementation of the ARC's recommendations within two years and requiring the FAA to continue to iteratively improve access to care for aviators through regular review of its medical clearance process. The bill also invests to ensure that we are equipped to attract more Aviation Medical Examiners—the doctors who work to ensure that safe pilots and air traffic controllers are cleared to fly, and creates a public information campaign to ensure that aviators know they can seek care.

Our skies are safest when pilots and air traffic controllers feel they can access the care they need, and return to work when it is safe to do so. To build on the success of last year's FAA Reauthorization and ensure that highly trained professionals with intense jobs can stay healthy, I urge the committee to consider the bipartisan Mental Health in Aviation Act.

Thank you.

Prepared Statement of Hon. J. Luis Correa, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for hosting Members' Day for members to share their request as the Committee develops a robust legislative agenda for the 119th Congress.

Today, I'd like to highlight my district's priorities for the 2025 Surface Transportation Reauthorization legislation. These matters reflect the needs of a dynamic and growing region that depends on efficient, flexible, and locally-driven transportation solutions.

A key priority for my constituents is the restoration of local suballocation authority for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. In California, these federal dollars have historically been distributed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to county transportation commissions (CTCs), like the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), through population-based formulas, consistent with state law. This long-standing framework has supported efficient project delivery. This structure is supported by state law, operationally effective, and essential to the timely and equitable delivery of transportation projects. This process has been followed for multiple decades.

However, recent federal guidance disrupted this process and added unnecessary bureaucracy and reduced local responsiveness. To remedy that, I request that the Committee reaffirms MPO flexibility and clarify that such suballocation is both legal and beneficial to regional implementation.

Local suballocation works because CTCs like OCTA have the statutory authority, technical expertise, and local knowledge to deliver projects efficiently. On the other

hand, shifting project selection authority to MPOs adds bureaucracy and undermines local capacity.

Under the new federal guidance, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which includes six counties, nearly 200 cities, and over 19 million residents, cannot adequately reflect the diverse needs of a large and complex region through a centralized MPO model. SCAG's shared governance model relies on county-level planning through individual TIPs.

Thus, I request the following amended language to revert this model to one that has proven to work:

Amend 23 U.S.C. § 134(j) by adding the following new paragraph:

- (5) *Suballocation in large metropolitan areas. In metropolitan planning areas with a total population exceeding 10,000,000, as determined by the most recent decennial census, the metropolitan planning organization shall further suballocate funds provided under sections 133 and 149 to county transportation agencies if the following requirements are met:*
 - (A) *the state which the metropolitan planning organization is located has enacted a statute detailing a suballocation process*
 - (i) *The suballocation process for funding under section 133 shall be based on population*
 - (ii) *the suballocation process for funding under section 149 shall be based on existing state statute that accounts for population and attainment status.*
 - (B) *the metropolitan planning organization retains responsibility for the final approval of the transportation improvement program under paragraph (1) of this subsection.*

Secondly, I urge the Committee to support federal investment and permitting coordination to help the Southern California region, including Orange County and transit agencies in the city of Anaheim, prepare for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This once-in-a-generation event will test our transportation infrastructure and requires strategic federal partnership. As Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy testified during an April 2, 2025, hearing before the U.S. Senate's Committee on Environment and Public Works, the 2028 Olympic Games will be "America's Games."

In a few years, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Anaheim Transportation Network, and other public transportation providers in Orange County will take on the immense task of working to ensure we have a safe, secure, efficient, and accessible transportation network for this global sporting event.

Ahead of 2028, Orange County is preparing to unveil OCVIBE in Anaheim, a multibillion dollar private investment. OCVIBE will span over 100 acres as a new entertainment district neighboring Disneyland Parks. As part of OCVIBE, the Honda Center in Anaheim was also chosen to host indoor volleyball for the 2028 Olympics. The importance of secured and reliable transit from Orange County to Los Angeles County during this time cannot be understated.

The 2028 Olympics Games will showcase the very best of America, and delivering a safe, effective, and efficient mobility network to support these Games will require the full support of the federal government.

Third, I urge the committee to continue supporting and funding the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, which provides supplemental funding to support local initiatives aimed at preventing death and serious injury on roads and streets. In 2023, Orange County Public Works was awarded a Planning Grant to develop a Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP), which will lay the framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on the County's local roads. SS4A allows the County of Orange to advance the implementation of the LRSP and subsequent safety improvements identified therein.

Fourth, I urge the committee to continue funding and support for the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant program. My district includes several railroad grade separation projects, including the 17th Street Grade Separation Project in the City of Santa Ana proposes to lower 17th Street and Lincoln Avenue to go under the Metrolink tracks. The objective of the project is to improve safety and alleviate traffic congestion along 17th Street. 17th Street serves as a major east/west arterial in the City of Santa Ana with connections to I-5. Increased vehicle and rail traffic at this location has resulted in the increase of delays at the existing highway-rail crossing of 17th Street in Metrolink's double-track corridor. These delays have not only affected the traveling public but have also impacted access by emergency vehicles. The proposed project would construct a railroad crossing structure to carry Metrolink over 17th Street, lowering the current grade of the roadway by approximately 20.5 feet and raising the railroad tracks by approximately 2 feet.

OCTA is also proposing to grade separate the railroad crossing at Ball Road in Anaheim and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) tracks, in order to enhance the safety of the rail-arterial crossing and to address future traffic and circulation issues.

I also urge that the Committee work to ensure that all grants previously awarded are disseminated to awardees in a timely manner. Last year, the City of Santa received \$25 million in federal funding for the Santa Ana Boulevard Grade Separation Project. Funding was secured through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that I proudly voted to pass.

Lastly, I speak in support of the following transit projects for the City of Anaheim:

1. *East-West Connector:* The City of Anaheim is evaluating the need and potential technology options for an East/West connector connecting The Anaheim Resort on the West with ARTIC/Honda Center/Angels Stadium/OCVIBE on the east. The need for a connection between these two areas was studied and identified in the Anaheim Resort Mobility Study.
2. *Ball Road/Phoenix Club Drive Intersection Widening:* As part of the OCVIBE Development Project, the project will be improving the intersection of Ball Rd/Phoenix Club Drive by widening the northbound approach to the intersection as well as lengthening the westbound left turn lane at the intersection. The improvements include traffic signal improvement/upgrades and will be completed prior to OCVIBE Phase 1 Opening.
3. *Pedestrian Bridge over Katella Avenue from ARTIC to the Honda Center:* As part of the OCVIBE Development Project, in partnership with the City of Anaheim, a pedestrian bridge will be constructed across Katella Avenue, connecting the ARTIC Train Station with Honda Center and the OCVIBE Development Project on the north. The Pedestrian Bridge will significantly increase pedestrian safety as it will eliminate the existing at grade vehicular/pedestrian conflicts at the intersection of Katella Rd/Douglass Rd.
4. *Resort Paseo:* The City of Anaheim is conducting this study to guide the planning, design, and implementation of walking improvements throughout The Anaheim Resort area. This will include the development of a plan of pedestrian circulation improvements which may include pedestrian bridges at key crossing locations.
5. *Resort and Platinum Triangle Signal/Light Pole Paint Enhancements:* The Anaheim Resort District, which includes Disneyland and Disney California Adventure, attracts over 25 million visitors each year. The Platinum Triangle includes Angels Stadium and Honda Center, the latter which will be home to LA28 Olympic games. Due to the tourism nature of the areas, the public realm was built and maintained in an aesthetically pleasing way which includes decorative and colored traffic signal and street light poles.

I thank the Committee again for this opportunity to discuss important priorities and to work together to transportation policies that meets the needs of communities across the country and invest in our infrastructure.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter and I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other issues and I yield back the balance of my time.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Jim Costa, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Good morning, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for holding this important Member's Day Hearing and providing me the opportunity to share the transportation and infrastructure priorities of California's San Joaquin Valley. It is critical we continue to work in a bipartisan fashion towards addressing our nation's infrastructure needs. I look forward to working with the committee and colleagues on shared goals such as: protecting our supply chains, building a sustainable rail and aviation system, and enhancing our water infrastructure.

SUPPLY CHAINS

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated our nation must prioritize and enhance supply chain resiliency. As I have always said, food se-

curity is national security, and when our food supply chain is threatened, we must act. As the committee considers supply chain priorities, I urge the committee to prioritize legislation that will empower the Federal Maritime Commission to protect fair trade and American business from foreign adversaries.

Additionally, I urge the committee to prioritize legislation that enhances our supply chain such as provisions in the bipartisan SHIP IT Act, to develop a stable and reliable trucking workforce. The SHIP IT Act improves our trucking system by enhancing the recruitment and retention of our trucking workforce by: modernizing the authority for certain vehicle waivers during emergencies; streamlining the Commercial Driver's License process; and incentivizing new truck drivers to enter the workforce through targeted and temporary tax credits.

SUSTAINABLE RAIL SERVICE

Rail safety and service are critical as we continue to ensure a safe, reliable system for the movement of our people and goods. The Federal-State Partnership for Inter-city Passenger Rail Grant Program is a critical program that funds projects nationwide that are construction ready and produce high speed rail, such as the California High-Speed Rail project. However, it is critical our passenger and freight rail are both addressed. As legislation is considered on rail safety, it is imperative the committee consider addressing common carrier agreements. Our nation must have both a safe and reliable rail system for the movement of goods and people.

AVIATION

As the committee considers aviation priorities this year, I urge the committee to consider the modernization needs of international airports with air traffic control towers not owned by the Federal Aviation Administration. The Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT) is a critical airport for the State of California and the nation, including by connecting people the world to California's crown jewel, Yosemite National Park. The airport is experiencing record air traffic and passenger growth. The airport also serves as a base for the 144th Fighter Wing of the California National Air Guard. Our TRACON system and air traffic control tower is over 30 years old and is in need of desperate enhancements to ensure a safe and efficient operations of the airspace around FAT. As the committee considers aviation priorities, I urge the committee to prioritize policy changes that enable airports like FAT to receive federal funding for air traffic control tower modernization and replacement.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

As you work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024, I urge the Committee and the Corps to work in tandem to expeditiously implement Sec. 1203(a)(10) of WRDA 2024. This section outlined language to expeditiously complete the feasibility study associated with Modifications to Pine Flat Dam. The raising of Pine Flat Dam will add 120,000 acre-feet of reservoir storage capacity, which is critical to enhance drought resiliency, support agriculture throughout the San Joaquin Valley, and protect against peak flood flows.

There are several efforts underway aimed at understanding and reducing flood risk on the Kings River. I urge the Committee and Army Corps to coordinate with local stakeholders engaged in Kings River operations to prioritize work related to the update of the Pine Flat Dam Water Control Manual. These updates should advance Hydrologic & Hydraulic modeling and Floodplain Data Inventory as the Corps undertakes an update to the Water Control Manual.

Furthermore, WRDA 2022 took important steps towards advancing Managed Aquifer Recharge as a tool to bolster California's water supply. The Redbank and Fancher Creek Project has been engaging with the Corps to be approved for Sec. 8108(b) funding pursuant to the Corps' January 17, 2025, Implementation Guidance. This project is critical for recharging a critically over-drafted aquifer, supporting economically disadvantaged communities in the area by providing water supply, and ameliorating the efforts of prolonged drought while reducing the risk of floods. I urge the Committee to continue to work with the Corps to advance Managed Aquifer Recharge in a rapid manner for key projects such as the Redbank and Fancher Creek Project.

Finally, I urge the Committee to work to update the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. I recently re-introduced my bipartisan bill, the Restoring WIFIA Eligibility Act, which would clarify that non-federal entities

who manage federally owned infrastructure are in fact qualified applicants. WIFIA could be a critical tool for financing repairs to projects such as the Jones Pumping Plant in California, that is critical for supplying water to tens of millions of people and millions of acres of farmland throughout California.

As the committee begins the process next year of writing the next Water Resources Development Act, I urge you to keep these water resources priorities in mind to advance flood resilience, groundwater recharge, and water supply reliability in the San Joaquin Valley.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to share these transportation and infrastructure priorities on behalf of California's 21st District. I look forward to working with the committee to build a better multi-modal transportation system for California's San Joaquin Valley and the nation.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Neal P. Dunn, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I look forward to supporting my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee ("T&I") while they work on the surface transportation reauthorization bill that the Committee will develop this Congress.

I appreciate the Chairman extending an invitation to members to speak on issues and policies under T&I's jurisdiction that are affecting our Districts.

I look forward to working with the Chairman to address important issues for the FL Panhandle.

First, I want to ask the Committee for support of my bill, the FEMA Loan Interest Payment Relief Act (H.R. 2836).

My bill requires FEMA to reimburse state and local governments and electric cooperatives for interest incurred on Stafford Act disaster-related loans within one-year of enactment.

Currently, local officials and non-profit groups take out loans to restore essential services following a natural disaster; however, while they are waiting for the loan to be reimbursed by FEMA, these loans incur interest.

FEMA must do its part to issue payment for this outstanding reimbursement-eligible interest.

Hurricane Michael devastated FL-02 in October 2018, and my district is *still* waiting for FEMA to reimburse loans.

This has been costing many of our counties millions of dollars—(over \$14 million) on interest that could have been avoided had FEMA provided prompt payment in the first place and then subsequently covered the interest incurred.

On December 9th, 2024, the bill passed the House by voice vote; the bill also passed the House by a large margin in the 117th Congress.

Bear in mind that this bill will help every state that relies on FEMA for assistance.

I look forward to working with the Chairman and Subcommittee Chairman, General Perry, to help get this across the finish line again in the 119th Congress.

I would also like to highlight the issue of FEMA project funding 'claw-backs', which affects several significant disaster recovery projects in my District.

There are a number of instances in my district where cities or counties are facing a requirement from FEMA to return already spent funds. In these cases, affected entities have submitted their projects to the state disaster management agency, in our case the Florida Division of Emergency Management ("FDEM") for review before their formal submission to FEMA.

FEMA then conducts its multi-tiered review process for each project, assigning a dedicated Program Manager (PDMG) to assess project eligibility.

Upon approval by FEMA, funds are obligated to FDEM for subsequent disbursement to the applicant city or county, enabling the start of project work.

However, recipients receive a Determination Memo (DM) "claw-back" of previously approved funds years later when FEMA initiates a review of the approved project worksheet after or near the project's completion.

In Florida's Second District, DMs were issued to several entities that were approved for disaster relief funding related to Hurricane Michael, which made landfall in 2018.

My district faces nearly \$100 million in pending funding claw-backs related to this one storm.

Each of these projects went through multiple vigorous FEMA reviews prior to approval and disbursement of funds.

Some of these projects were in the middle of completion when DMs were issued, leaving them abandoned in the middle of construction—potentially causing more damage than had they been completed in a timely manner.

The most significant impact of these ‘claw-backs’ will be on rural and fiscally constrained communities.

The amount of funding that FEMA is asking these entities to return *undoubtedly has the potential to bankrupt and/or put them in significant debt.*

It is incumbent that the disaster survivors do not bear the brunt of errors made by federal agencies.

I wrote a bill to address this persistent issue. My proposed bill would exempt “covered project” costs to FEMA Public Assistance (PA) projects while executing a grant agreement with FEMA.

Mr. Chairman, I am *encouraged* by the bill draft you released on May 8th, the Fixing Emergency Management Americans (“FEMA”) Act.

This bill will help reform the many challenges my district has faced while working with the Federal Agency including the disastrous clawback requirements under the Biden Administration.

I look forward to supporting the finalized bill text.

Lastly, I have several ongoing projects with the Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”).

These outstanding projects are characterized by permitting and significant outstanding work delays and have been on the backburner with the Corps for too long.

I am working with the Appropriations Committee as well as T&I to address these projects.

These include crucial dredging projects like the Keaton Beach Canal, in Taylor County, FL—commercial fishing boats and tourist charters cannot get in and out of the channel.

This is one of the only means of livelihood for my constituents who live there.

I look forward to partnering with my colleagues on this Committee on an array of issues from disaster recovery, infrastructure improvements, support of Corps project completion, and others.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify here today and hope to have T&I consideration on these incredibly important issues for my District.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Mike Flood, a Representative in Congress from the State of Nebraska

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and all the members of the Committee. I am grateful for this opportunity to highlight an important project in Nebraska’s First Congressional District that I intend to submit for consideration as part of the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act.

Specifically, I would like to call to your attention the proposed “*Lincoln East Beltway*” located in Lincoln, Nebraska and Lancaster County, Nebraska. Lincoln is the Capital of Nebraska, proudly home to the flagship University of Nebraska—Lincoln, and, most importantly, where roughly three hundred thousand of my constituents reside.

The Lincoln East Beltway is a proposed new highway corridor on the east fringe of the Lincoln, Nebraska, metropolitan area, spanning from an interchange with the Lincoln South Beltway approximately 13 miles to an interchange with Interstate 80. This project involves the development of a four-lane divided freeway that would *alleviate congestion, improve connectivity, and support regional growth* in the Lincoln, Nebraska, metropolitan area.

Recognized as a key transportation priority, the Lincoln East Beltway is included in the Lincoln / Lancaster County 2050 Comprehensive Plan for corridor protection and is listed in the Lincoln / Lancaster County, Nebraska Metropolitan Planning Organization 2025–2028 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

On January 23, 2007, the City of Lincoln and the County of Lancaster entered into an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to prepare a preliminary design and to file corridor protection plans for the proposed Lincoln East Beltway. The Nebraska corridor protection statute provides an important tool for responsible planning. Corridor protection identifies and protects future transportation corridors prior to costly and conflicting development of land. This planning tool allows local residents and business owners to make informed decisions about their property to plan for future infrastructure that will meet their needs, and it also takes into consideration the protection of en-

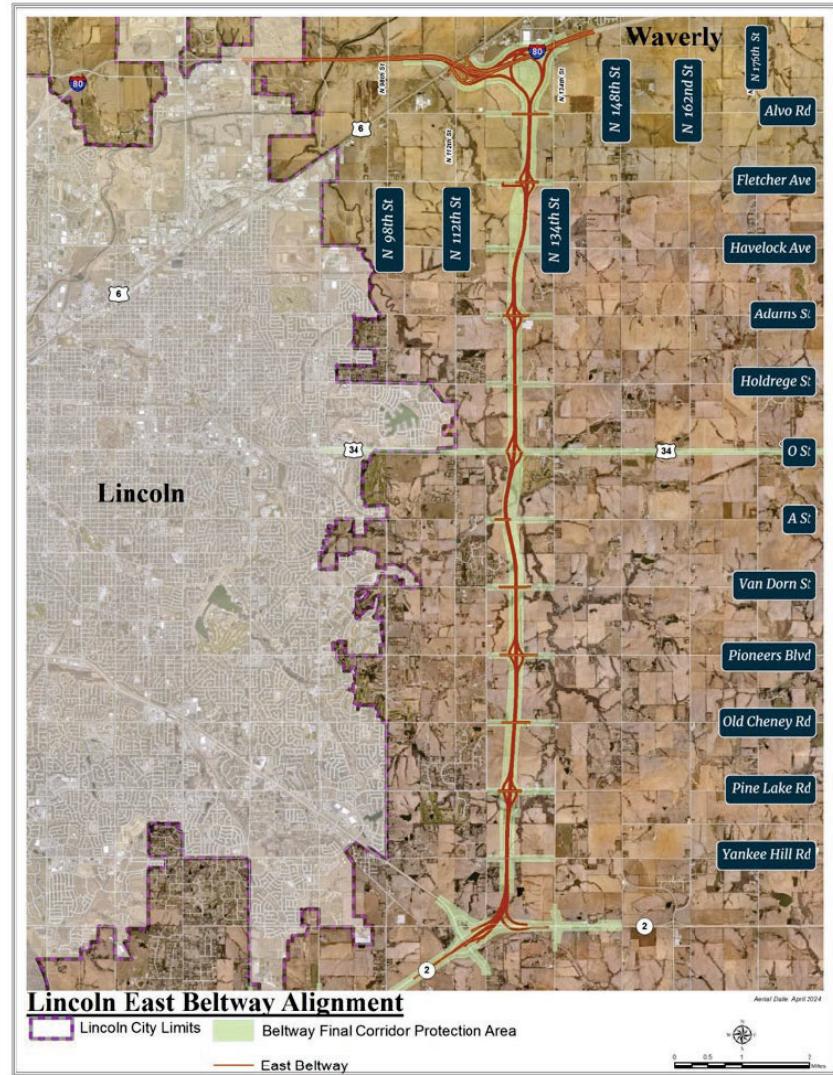
vironmentally sensitive areas. For the traveling public, corridor protection provides the opportunity to have transportation alternatives delivered more cost effectively.

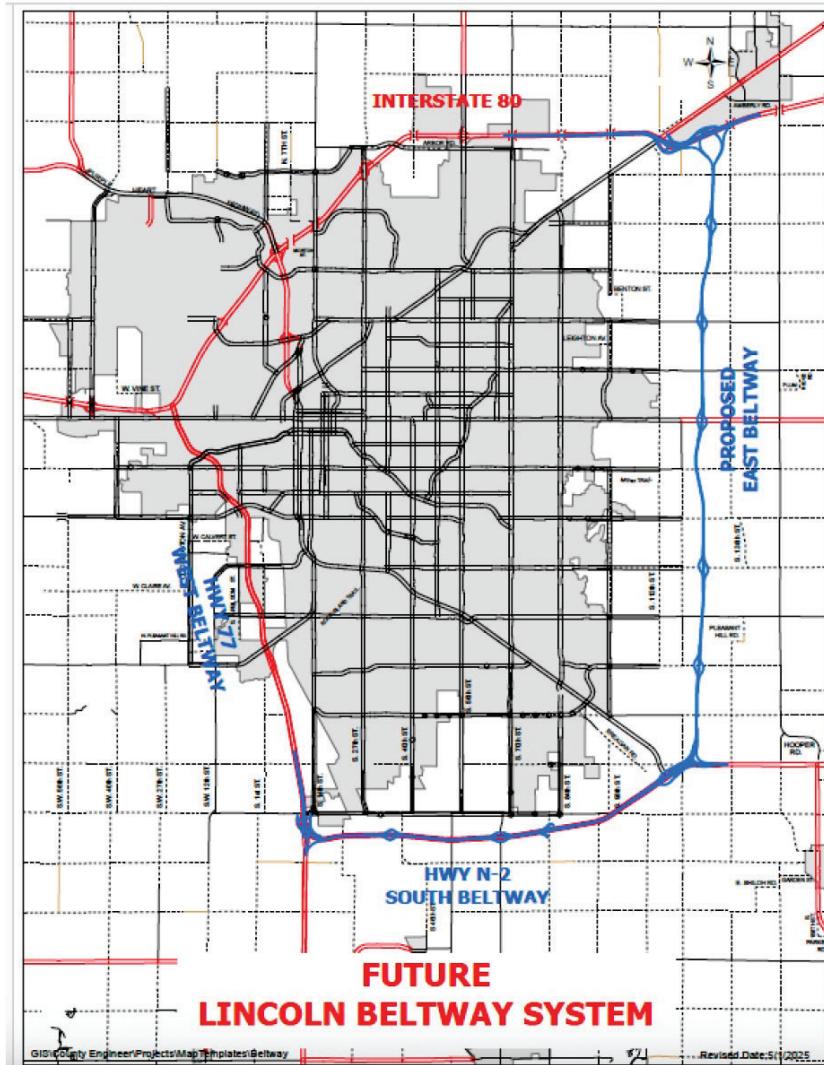
The current corridor protection plan spans a slightly larger area than the original plan, as the estimated number of acres that need to be acquired through right-of-way have increased. Since inception, *the City of Lincoln and the County of Lancaster have already acquired approximately \$4.1 million of right-of-way through the corridor protection process*, and the City and County are positioned to continue to protect the corridor as parcels become available for purchase.

Transportation options are vital to keeping the City of Lincoln and the County of Lancaster economically competitive, and physical transportation infrastructure is an integral component of the supply chain that supports our continued local, regional, and statewide growth in a competitive global economy. Now that the City of Lincoln's South Beltway is complete, *the Lincoln East Beltway remains the final uncompleted portion of the expressway system around the City of Lincoln*. In anticipation of completing this project, the City of Lincoln and the County of Lancaster have invested millions of dollars in securing the Lincoln East Beltway corridor for future development. To ensure continued economic growth, *federal investment is critical* to realize the completion of the expressway system serving the City of Lincoln and the County of Lancaster.

The Lincoln East Beltway will provide an alternative route to existing roads, reducing traffic congestion on major corridors such as U.S. Highway 77, Nebraska Highway 6, and Nebraska Highway 2. By diverting through-traffic, particularly heavy truck traffic, away from residential and commercial areas, the project will *enhance daily commutes and reduce travel times*. In addition to the jobs created during construction, expanded transportation corridors will *attract businesses and foster economic development*, benefiting both *urban and rural areas* in the County of Lancaster.

Thank you for this opportunity to highlight the proposed Lincoln East Beltway. I look forward to working with you to support this important priority and invest in the future of Nebraska's First Congressional District.





Prepared Statement of Hon. Josh Gottheimer, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify. I want to particularly recognize my New Jersey colleagues, Rep. Pou and Rep. Van Drew, who worked so hard to advance New Jersey's priorities as members of this committee.

Since May 5, 2025, Newark Airport has seen more than 1,700 cancellations and delays—many of them last minute. United Airlines has cut 35 regularly scheduled flights from Newark, and its CEO even told people to go to other airports because of these issues.

Travelers have had it with the delays and cancellations—and with good reason. It's not because Newark Airport isn't one of the best in the world, with the best of

the best working in our terminals, on the runways, and in the towers to keep us safe. It's because, right now, the airport simply lacks the FAA tower staffing levels, modern technology, and infrastructure that we need. Add that to the ongoing runway construction project—and you can see why it's a mess and why things are jammed up.

Last year, nearly 146 million air passengers flew in and out of the New Jersey-New York metro area—a new record. Our region is a key economic artery for our country. It's where 20 percent of the nation's GDP runs through. Yet, this region, the Newark sector, as the FAA calls it, one of the busiest air spaces in the whole world, is running off a tower that's full of copper wire and 1980s outdated and inefficient technology. And, the region is short of about 40 air traffic controllers.

Fixing this problem won't just happen with the snap of a finger. Here's what we need to get this done.

First, I recently called on the Trump Administration and the Secretary to immediately send an emergency funding request to Congress to fully fund the Administration's FAA air traffic control overhaul plan. It is imperative that the Committee works across the aisle to get this funding request up for a vote before the House by June 1. It's clear that we can't afford to delay fixing our towers any longer. No more copper wires. No more outdated technology. We are the greatest country in the world. We must do this now.

Second, I called on the FAA to work to move more air traffic controllers from other parts of the country to this short-staffed region—the busiest airspace in the world. The staffing shortage has meant more delays and cancellations—and more overworked and stressed air traffic controllers. I hope that you will work with the FAA to see this action taken as soon and as safely as possible. We should pay these air traffic controllers whatever it takes to get them to Newark.

I'm also suggesting that we go a step further. In your effort to conduct oversight over the FAA during this current Air Traffic Controller crisis, there is an opportunity for the Committee to advance legislation to establish a training program to safely and smartly fast-track Combat Controllers, or CCTs, from the military to become FAA-certified Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs). I've heard from many military controllers who are ready with the experience and desire to help. But, red tape and a two to three-year-long certification process are stopping them.

By creating this program, we can help fast-track military control tower workers, get them trained on how to handle the Newark airspace, reduce staff shortages, and help airports like ours get back on track. This is just common sense, and clearly if they can handle the skies in a military offensive, they would have a good leg up on handling flights here.

Third, we must ensure that as we upgrade the towers to new technology, as outlined in the Secretary's plan, our air traffic controllers are trained to use it. So, I am asking for the Committee to work with the FAA to create a plan to fully train all ATCs on any new equipment while upgrades are made. We need to give our air traffic controllers the tools they need to hit the ground running.

Besides the current ATC crisis at Newark Airport, North Jersey is plagued with highway issues from large sinkholes. The sinkholes across Interstate 80 in North Jersey have led to road closures that are severely impacting Jersey families, small businesses, and commuters who rely on this critical highway every day to get to work, support our local economy, and visit friends and family. I am calling on the Committee to ensure that the emergency funding requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation from the Federal Highway Administration is approved as soon as possible to help fix our roads. I am also calling on the Committee to look into the integrity of Jersey roads from the large number of mines beneath them which have created this sinkhole crisis.

We must also ensure the completion of the Gateway Train Tunnel. I am calling on the Committee to ensure that there are no delays with the funding and completion of this critical project. The current tunnel between New Jersey and New York is more than 110 years old and if it were to crumble, it would cost the regional economy \$100 million a day. I helped craft and pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, which will fund a major portion of the Tunnel, including the Hudson River Tunnel and Portal North Bridge, invest in New Jersey's ports, roads, rails, and bridges, address supply chain issues, create jobs, and boost our local economy in Jersey.

After years of hard work, there's nothing better than seeing federal investment at work to help our families with faster, safer, and more reliable commutes. As long as we invest in our infrastructure to keep our roads, skies, and families safe, I know that here in the greatest country in the world, our best days will always be ahead of us. Thank you.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Harriet M. Hageman, a Representative in Congress from the State of Wyoming

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee:

I am grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the Committee's Member Day hearing regarding the issue of reliable transportation and its importance in the movement of Wyoming's resources, particularly oil, coal, and trona.

As many of you may know, my home state of Wyoming is one of the top energy-producing states in the nation. Its long history as a leader in this market has contributed immensely to the abundance of affordable energy that we as a country continue to take advantage of today. In terms of production, we are ranked #10 in natural gas, #8 in crude oil, #1 in coal, and are poised to be a leader in the growth of nuclear power and technology with our ample reserves of raw materials.¹ We are also the largest producer of trona in the United States, with the countries of China and Kazakhstan being our largest competitors. Each of these industries generates significant revenue for the state and local economies while employing thousands of hard-working Wyomingites across a broad range of professional careers.

While the importance of these affordable energy and manufacturing resources cannot be overstated, guaranteeing their accessibility and possessing the means to transport them to locations and economies far and wide is just as critical. Lacking a consistent source of reliable transportation, even for a short amount of time, can easily cause immediate and significant harm to these legacy industries and the millions of businesses and consumers who rely upon their products for the most basic of needs. One can look no further than back to 2022, when limited rail transport resulted in millions of dollars in lost revenue for Wyoming's coal industry, as companies simply could not get paid until after the coal successfully left the mines.² Consistent, reliable, and affordable rail transport is critical for the entire Country, and especially so in Wyoming. Without Wyoming coal, we cannot turn the lights on. Without Wyoming oil, we cannot power our economy. Without Wyoming trona, our glass industries falter.

Furthermore, and continuing to use coal as an example, there remains an expanding appetite for Wyoming coal in different regions across the globe, particularly Taiwan, Japan, and Southeast Asia. With nearly all the coal mined in Wyoming currently shipped via rail, taking advantage of this interest by not only maximizing our production, but also exploring and expanding the means by which to expeditiously move these resources to their destinations, is critical to both the prosperity of Wyoming's industries and maintaining the United States' longstanding position of global energy leadership.

Unfortunately, despite what should be an issue where common ground can be found, over the last several years, party-line politics has sidelined opportunities that once had the potential to bring in additional revenue and create new jobs. Politicians and environmental groups from the West Coast states have routinely blocked plans for the use of coal-export or gateway terminals. However, with President Trump's Executive Order unleashing American energy and reinvigorating our clean coal industries, employing creative solutions, such as increasing existing rail capacity and forming connections to new routes of transport, including the Mississippi River and the Gulf of America, is more essential than ever.

As previously emphasized, without the continued use of our affordable energy sources and the lack of a consistently reliable means of transport, we will inevitably witness greater hardships placed upon countless Wyomingites and Americans who are either employed in the energy sector or rely upon its essential outputs.

Once again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit written testimony, and I look forward to working with each of you as we continue to invest and explore new ways to modernize our transportation networks and assert America's energy and trona dominance. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff at any point.

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=WY#:~:text=Wyoming%20was%20the%20eighth%2Dlargest,of%20U.S.%20marketed%20gas%20production>.

² <https://cowboystatedaily.com/2023/02/16/disappointing-rail-service-throttles-wyoming-coal-de-spite-record-1-3-billion-revenue-in-2022-arch-reports/>

**Prepared Statement of Hon. J. French Hill, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Arkansas**

Dear Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

As you begin crafting the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill, I respectfully submit my following remarks for consideration during the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee's Member Day Hearing.

Congress bears the responsibility of ensuring safe and reliable transportation for the country—and has done so since enactment of the Federal Aid Road Act in 1916. The most recent transportation reauthorization was the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). As you may know, IIJA authorized nearly \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure spending, of which approximately \$650 billion was directed toward funding for surface transportation and the remaining \$550 billion was directed toward new investments and programs. It is set to expire at the end of fiscal year (FY) 2026, leaving this Congress the express authority to ensure its reauthorization.

It is my hope that this new reauthorization will address a few key issues:

1. Resolve the solvency of the highway trust fund (HTF). Should Congress fail to act to ensure the long-term sustainability of the HTF within this reauthorization, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects the HTF will run out of money in 2028. To prevent significant delay in the planning and construction of projects, provide stable reimbursements and regulatory certainty to states, stakeholders, and businesses, and to ensure that many of the benefits from the Federal surface transportation program, including jobs, safety, and support of continued economic growth are continued, I urge adoption of a stable, long-term funding solution that includes insight with states and the larger transportation community and fiscal responsibility in mind.
2. Work to continue to cut bureaucratic red tape that slows down infrastructure project approval and construction. While some of these efforts have been included in recent surface reauthorizations, I hope to see a continued effort to ensure quick maintenance and construction, while also preserving our environment, including work to streamline the permitting process. This allows for increased flexibility within programs and better project delivery.

I also ask you to give full and fair consideration to the following programs in the upcoming Surface Reauthorization bill. Each of these programs has been important to my district and essential in helping deliver investments to central Arkansas and the state at-large:

- 1) The Accelerated Implementation and Deployment of Pavement Technologies (AIDPT) Program. A significant proportion of program dollars at the Federal Highway Administration are spent on pavements, and this program is essential in helping identify and deploy new cost efficient and safe pavement solutions.
- 2) The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program. This program is important in promoting and improving railroad safety, and in helping mitigate congestion at freight rail chokepoints.
- 3) The Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) Program, which provides funding to decrease the number of fatalities, injuries, and crashes at public railway-highway crossings.
- 4) The Department of Transportation's Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP), which funds infrastructure and maintenance projects for ports across America.

Thank you for your leadership in this area and for your consideration of my requests. These items are important to my home state of Arkansas, and I join those lending their support for these items.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Wesley Hunt, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Texas**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I first want to thank the Committee for their tremendous work in WRDA 24, which included language from me and Lizzie Fletcher, requiring the Army Corps of Engineers to complete BBTRS, an imperative study in Houston.

Protecting Houston from flooding is my top priority, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to the committee for the work you have done to support my hometown of Houston, Texas.

Another important topic I'd like to discuss today is the Presidio International Bridge in Presidio, Texas, one of the poorest counties in Texas, with a poverty rate of approximately 40%.

I have proposed language that would enable Presidio County to collect a toll from travelers entering the United States.

Currently, the Presidio International Bridge is the only port of entry in Texas, out of 28, that does not require a toll to enter the U.S.

Presidio County would use the funds generated from the toll to support its local emergency and Law enforcement services.

I would encourage the Committee to include this language in its upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Committee for its support of Project 11 at the Houston Ship Channel.

The Houston Ship Channel is the gateway to our nation's number one export region, serving as the leading port for foreign commerce and as the top American energy port.

The Houston Ship Channel is also the busiest deep-draft waterway in the entire country.

Each year, the Houston Ship Channel generates almost 1 trillion dollars in economic activity and supports over 3 million jobs nationwide.

Congress' continued investment in the Houston Ship Channel is imperative and will help bring economic prosperity to all Americans across our great country.

Thank you to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for having me here today.

Prepared Statement of Hon. David Kustoff, a Representative in Congress from the State of Tennessee

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you for hosting this Member Day hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on the importance of the I-69 project in West Tennessee and its role in strengthening transportation infrastructure in our region and across the country.

I-69 is a vital component of what is known as High Priority Corridor 18, a corridor that stretches through the heart of mid-America. This designation dates back to when Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), to identify certain highway corridors as nationally significant and direct that they be incorporated into the National Highway System.

The I-69 route has been divided into multiple segments, three of which directly impact the state of Tennessee:

- *Segment 7*—from Fulton, Kentucky to Dyersburg, Tennessee
- *Segment 8*—from Dyersburg to Millington, Tennessee
- *Segment 9*—from Millington, Tennessee to Hernando, Mississippi

With the recent completion of the stretch through Indiana, I-69 now provides a continuous interstate connection from Port Huron, Michigan, at the Canadian border, down to the Kentucky state line. Kentucky is currently working to upgrade existing parkways to full interstate standards, which will further extend this critical corridor southward. That makes it more important to prioritize completing the Tennessee portion of I-69.

Finishing the segments in Tennessee is the next key step to closing the gap in this corridor—a corridor that not only supports strong demand for the movement of goods but also serves thousands of short to medium-length trips that drive local and regional economies. By completing I-69 through Tennessee, we won't just improve connectivity between our state and major markets to the north and south—we'll also relieve congestion on nearby highways, make travel safer, and position our communities to better take advantage of economic development opportunities tied to a modern transportation network.

When completed, I-69 will connect with 16 existing interstate highways that cross Corridor 18—including 10 east-west routes and 6 north-south routes. It will also link 10 urban areas, each with a population over 50,000, along the corridor. Within these urban areas, I-69 will make it easier to upgrade existing interstate routes, improve connections between major transportation corridors and radial freeways, and better link key freight hubs, terminals, and multi-modal facilities to the broader interstate highway network.

In short, finishing I-69 is about far more than laying pavement. It is about tying together communities, improving safety, boosting local and regional economies, and enhancing our nation's ability to move goods efficiently. I urge continued support for this project and the investment necessary to see it through.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Kevin Mullin, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for allowing me to testify before the Committee about my priorities for the bill you are writing to authorize surface transportation programs.

I will be submitting several requests to the Committee, but I wanted to highlight some of those here:

1. EMPTY LOTS TO HOUSING ACT

First, as you are aware, there is broad, bipartisan agreement that the United States is in the midst of a severe housing crisis. Nationwide, we're short nearly 4.9 million homes, and one in four renters spends more than half their income on rent. To address this, we need to increase housing supply—especially near public transit. That's why I'm introducing the Empty Lots to Housing Act, which would grant the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) the authority to allow state and local agencies to repurpose underutilized land acquired with FHWA funds for transit-oriented development, including affordable housing.

To take just one example, in my district, a mostly vacant parking lot near a rapid transit station, which was purchased by our transportation agency decades ago with FHWA funds, could be redeveloped into housing. Both the local agency and FHWA support this initiative, but FHWA does not currently have the authority to approve this change in use of the land. This bill would remove that barrier, extending to FHWA the same flexibility Congress granted to the Federal Transit Administration in 2021. This is a simple step that would help communities unlock land for urgently needed housing without new federal spending.

2. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Second, I would respectfully ask the Committee to prioritize pedestrian safety as it relates to both the technology in cars as well as along railroads.

As you are likely aware, pedestrian injuries and fatalities from traffic accidents are at record highs. In 2022, the United States saw more than 7,500 pedestrians killed and more than 67,000 pedestrians injured. Simultaneously, the driver experience has been changing. Touch screens have been quickly replacing physical controls, such as switches, knobs, and dials. While smartphone usage has also increased, it cannot fully explain the spike in pedestrian fatalities and injuries in the U.S. but not in other countries. The only thing is clear is that more research is needed.

My bill, the Driver Technology and Pedestrian Safety Act, would direct the Department of Transportation to study the effects of driver technology—including touch screen-based systems and user interface design—and the impact of time of day and changes in traffic, weather, and the volume of commercial vehicles on the road as they relate to pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Please consider including this bill's provisions in the text you are writing.

Addressing traffic and pedestrian safety along rail corridors is also critical. According to the Federal Railroad Administration, there were 2,252 crossing collisions in 2024, resulting in 268 fatalities and 749 injuries. While full grade separation is considered the gold standard for safety, it often comes with an astronomical price tag and can take years or even decades to plan, fund, and construct. I know this from challenges with this in my own district. To make meaningful safety improvements more broadly and affordably, we need to explore innovative, technology-driven alternatives.

For example, Caltrain—a commuter rail line that goes through the heart of my district—has piloted a promising solution that uses AI-enabled sensors and machine learning to detect patterns of use and identify potential safety hazards at crossings in real time. The entire system was implemented for just \$300,000, a fraction of the \$889 million quoted for grade separation at the same location—and deployed within months, not years.

To better understand the potential of this approach nationwide, I am requesting that you include in an eventual bill a study to examine this approach at rail crossings.

3. RAIL ELECTRIFICATION

Third, I respectfully urge the Committee to make bold commitments to modernize our railways using electric and battery technology. Here again, Caltrain, which serves over 7 million annual riders, offers a compelling example. Its recent transition from diesel to electric trains was the first large-scale conversion in decades. It has, within months, delivered smoother, faster service and an impressive 54% ridership increase. Investing in clean electric rail infrastructure is vital for improving air quality and reducing our carbon footprint.

I urge the committee to build upon a recent Department of Energy report and direct the Federal Railroad Administration to convene stakeholders and develop an implementation plan for rail electrification. Furthermore, railways should have access to funding for pilot studies. For example, regenerative braking, a proven technology used in hybrid cars for decades, could recover 20 to 55% of train energy, and generate substantial cost savings for rail systems.

I will be submitting proposals on both of these issues to the Committee for consideration for inclusion.

4. RAIL AND HIGHWAY CORRIDOR TRANSMISSION

Lastly, I respectfully urge the Committee to explore how we can better leverage existing infrastructure to meet our nation's growing energy needs. Meeting future demand will require a major expansion of our transmission system—particularly interregional transmission lines, which are much more efficient than local or regional networks and essential to lowering energy costs for consumers. Yet construction of these lines remains incredibly difficult due to cross-state siting challenges and disputes over cost sharing.

That is why I am proposing a study to evaluate the opportunities, benefits, and barriers to using existing highway and rail rights-of-way for high-voltage transmission lines. This study would help identify how we can use current federal assets to modernize the grid, reduce energy costs, and meet rising demand with cleaner, more reliable power.

Thank you again for considering these proposals. And a big thanks in advance to you and your staff for your hard work in crafting an eventual bill.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Scott H. Peters, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

Thank you for hosting “Member Day” for your colleagues like me who have important priorities in front of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. I’d like to highlight the following issues that affect my district and the country as a whole:

1. The Build More Housing Near Transit Act and issues of public transportation, density, and housing;
2. The Ocean Pollution Reduction Act II;
3. To authorize the International Boundary and Water Commission to accept funds for activities relating to wastewater treatment and flood control works, and for other purposes;
4. The LOSSAN Rail Corridor; and
5. The reconfiguration of the San Diego Courthouse.

First, in the 118th Congress, I introduced the Build More Housing Near Transit Act, H.R. 6199. This legislation highlights the importance of investing in public transportation that prioritizes decongesting our roads, increases sustainability, and supports regional planning that increases the production of housing.

I urge the Committee to continue to improve access to transit infrastructure and encourage more commuters to take public transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled. The federal government can only support a limited number of transit infrastructure projects each year. We need to make sure that the federal government is making the most of our taxpayer dollars when it comes to these projects. In exchange for the massive federal investments Congress makes in transit infrastructure, we must ask local and state governments to commit to building more dense housing along transit corridors, ensuring efficiency and a strong customer base.

Large and small cities across the country struggle to build enough housing to keep rent affordable for working class families.

My bipartisan bill, the Build More Housing Near Transit Act which will soon be reintroduced in the 119th Congress with Rep. Blake Moore, would achieve these goals. This bill would incentivize state and local governments to improve housing policies by rewarding them when they apply for federal transit funding. The Build More Housing Near Transit Act amends the discretionary Capital Investment Grants program to provide a bonus for transit projects if nearby jurisdictions adopt pro-housing policies. I respectfully ask that my bipartisan legislation be included in any reauthorizing package the Committee considers.

Second, I introduced H.R. 1390, the Ocean Pollution Reduction Act II, with the support of all members of the San Diego delegation, Reps. Levin, Jacobs, Vargas, and Issa. This bill will provide the City of San Diego with regulatory certainty as it continues to make significant progress, as well as major investments, in enhancing its water and wastewater systems. The Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant (PLWTP) is in San Diego, CA. It currently treats 175 million gallons of wastewater per day, serving 2.2 million residents, and 12 water agencies in a 450-square-mile area. PLWTP's ocean outfall is 4.5 miles and 300 feet deep and is one of the longest and deepest outfalls in the world. Since 2010, the PLWTP has met alternate discharge for total suspended solids (TSS) and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) under a modified National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit approved by EPA as authorized by section 301(h) of the Clean Water Act and the Ocean Pollution Reduction Act of 1994 (OPRA). As part of its efforts to meet these alternate standards, the City is making a long-term investment in The Pure Water Program, a multi-year, multi-billion-dollar program that will use proven water purification technology to provide one-third of San Diego's water supply by 2039. Although the City has never failed to renew its modified permit, the renewal process creates unnecessary regulatory uncertainty for ratepayers and municipal water and sewer authorities.

This legislation does not modify the Clean Water Act and maintains the protections of the Clean Water Act for wastewater treatment facilities across the country, while also adding additional requirements to discharge standards and enhanced environmental monitoring specifically for Point Loma. This program and legislation are supported by a broad coalition of environmental, labor, business, and community leaders because it provides regulatory certainty while also securing an independent, drought-resilient supply of water. With your help, I look forward to passing this bill through the House again and signed into law this Congress.

Third, I introduced H.R. 1948, To authorize the International Boundary and Water Commission to accept funds for activities relating to wastewater treatment and flood control works, and for other purposes. Under current law, federal agencies as well as state and local entities remain unable to transfer funds to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) for projects related to wastewater treatment works, water conservation projects, or flood control works. This leaves IBWC almost solely reliant upon annual appropriations or emergency funding to build and maintain its facilities. Although funding for IBWC has increased in recent years, more flexible funding arrangements would help the agency work with other partners to address relevant projects.

IBWC's jurisdiction covers the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) located in San Diego. Long-standing operational failures at SBIWTP have resulted in raw sewage contamination flowing from the Tijuana River into the Pacific Ocean that is then carried into San Diego. This results in a public health crisis that strains local resources, poses significant environmental risks, and forces service members to train in polluted sewage water.

This bill authorizes IBWC to accept funds for activities related to wastewater treatment and flood control works. This language would allow other federal agencies or entities like the State of California, the City of San Diego and others to provide funding to IBWC. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed this bill by voice vote in the 119th and 118th Congresses. I look forward to working with the Committee on passing the bill in the House.

Fourth, the LOSSAN (Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo) rail corridor has grown to become the second busiest passenger rail corridor in the United States, after Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. However, unlike the Northeast Corridor, the majority of which is controlled directly by Amtrak, the LOSSAN corridor has many stakeholders, and improvements require substantial cooperation at the federal, state, and local levels. I believe the LOSSAN corridor deserves dedicated funding, just like the Northeast Corridor, to deliver these upgrades.

Over the past two and a half years, a seven-mile stretch of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor has repeatedly experienced closures for a cumulative total of over 12 months.

Climate-induced storm surges, sea-level rise, and erosion have impacted railroad track movement and slope instability along the LOSSAN Rail Corridor right-of-way, resulting in service disruption to both passenger and freight rail services. These closures have negatively impacted passenger transportation, freight services, and military operations throughout the region. Regarding passenger travel time, bottlenecks and repeated closures have contributed to significant travel delays.

The work needed to improve operations, enhance climate resilience, and achieve significant travel time improvements broadly fall into three main categories: capacity improvements, speed and directness improvements, and fleet modernization. Together, projects supporting these three areas of corridor enhancement will not only provide for enhanced service frequency and corridor capacity but are anticipated to save as much as 20 minutes of travel time between Downtown San Diego and Oceanside alone. With a similar commitment from other LOSSAN corridor stakeholders, rail travel times could approach two hours between San Diego and Los Angeles. I look forward to working with the committee to improve service for the second busiest rail corridor in the nation.

Fifth, I would like to stress my strong support for allowing the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California to reconfigure existing space in the San Diego Courthouse (Carter-Keep Courthouse Annex) to house judges. In 2009, this Committee authorized the construction of the Carter-Keep Courthouse. The authorization included House Committee language requiring all expansion requests to be approved by Congress. In 2022, the courts requested permission to build out additional chambers and courtrooms. I ask that the House authorize the San Diego project and remove the cap on future buildouts to provide the court the space needed to operate in a more safe and secure manner.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other issues.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Raul Ruiz, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Hello, I'm Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz, and I represent California's 25th District. It's an honor to speak with you today about the critical infrastructure needs that shape the safety, mobility, and well-being of the communities I represent.

Among the most urgent priorities in my district are grade separation projects and the construction and maintenance of airport towers. Both are essential to strengthening our transportation systems and emergency response capabilities.

As an emergency medicine physician, I've seen firsthand how crucial it is for ambulances and first responders to have fast, reliable routes to hospitals and crisis sites.

In emergency situations, even brief delays can mean the difference between life and death. I will continue being a vocal advocate for transportation infrastructure, especially those that improve emergency operations and air safety.

In California's 25th District, we face significant rail traffic. There are over 250 miles of freight and passenger railways that connect my district with the rest of California and other parts of the country.

Ensuring that trains and vehicles do not intersect at the same grade isn't just a matter of convenience, it's a matter of public health and safety. Freight trains stalled on the tracks for extended periods have cost many Americans their livelihoods. Providing alternative routes in case of blockages is crucial for our communities.

Grade separations reduce accidents, prevents injuries, and saves lives. With Union Pacific Railroad's extensive network running through my district, creating safer crossings that separate rail and automobile traffic is key to protecting passengers, drivers, and pedestrians alike.

Just last November, a Union Pacific Railroad train was stalled for over four hours, causing significant traffic delays. Students were stranded on school buses, and emergency transports to local hospitals were delayed due to blocked roadways.

One local resident shared that her mother nearly had to be airlifted from their home to reach an ambulance waiting on the other side of the tracks.

The environmental benefits are equally important. When cars are stuck idling at rail crossings, they burn fuel and generate harmful emissions. By improving traffic flow through grade separation, we cut down on pollution and move closer to achieving our environmental goals.

Grade separation infrastructure ensures that emergency vehicles can bypass road blockages and deliver lifesaving care without delay, making it a smart investment in both public health and emergency preparedness.

Beyond safety, these projects reflect the will of the people. I hear from constituents across my district who want safer, more efficient roads that meet the needs of our growing communities. Grade separation is one of the most effective strategies to future-proof our infrastructure and prepare for tomorrow's transportation demands.

Airport towers are equally vital to the safety and prosperity of our district. The Imperial County Airport, Blythe Airport, Hemet-Ryan airport, and the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport are hubs for commercial, private, and emergency air traffic.

In a given year, these airports see an average of 150,000 aircraft operations. Communication between these flights and the air tower is critical to ensuring the safety of each aircraft operation throughout the nation's airports.

These towers also play a vital role in helping to direct air traffic in a way that minimizes risk and ensures that emergency services can respond quickly when needed.

Whether it's business travel, medical transport, firefighting, or general aviation, our skies are busier than ever, and well-equipped towers are essential to maintaining order, preventing collisions, reducing delays, and managing complex air traffic operations.

Airport towers also play a pivotal role during emergencies, coordinating search-and-rescue missions, evacuations, and air support in times of crisis. Investing in their maintenance and expansion ensures that our region remains ready to respond to any disaster.

For our communities, grade-separated crossings to state-of-the-art airport towers are the foundation of our safety and preparedness. These projects aren't just about moving people and goods more efficiently; they're about building a safer, more secure future for everyone in our communities.

That's why today, I urge my colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to join me in supporting funding for airport towers, aviation infrastructure, and grade separation projects.

This is not about partisanship, it's about public health, safety, economic vitality, and national preparedness. Together, we can secure the investments needed to protect lives, strengthen communities, and ensure a brighter future for all our constituents.

Thank you.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Glenn Thompson, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to share my priorities for the 119th Congress. Representing one of the most rural districts east of the Mississippi River, access to quality infrastructure and reliable transit is critical for farmers, small businesses, manufacturers, and others throughout my district. Particularly as the Committee approaches the next surface transportation reauthorization, I appreciate your consideration of the following requests.

APPALACHIAN DEVELOPMENT HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) is a network of 33 distinct corridors initiated in 1965 via the Appalachian Regional Development Act to link the underserved Appalachian region with the greater interstate system, reduce isolation, and spark economic growth. The system totals 3,090 miles and connects the 13 Appalachian states with the Interstate Highway System and a range of domestic and global markets.

My district, which is critical to various supply chains nationwide, is home to four unfinished ADHS corridors. While more than 90 percent of the ADHS is complete or under construction, it is critical Congress continues to uphold its decades-long commitment to complete the system. To achieve this goal, I respectfully request ADHS projects continue to be funded at up to 100 percent federal cost share and the authorization for these projects be no less than currently authorized levels in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

Additionally, as you know, the mileage of the ADHS determines eligibility for ADHS-specific federal funding and cannot be altered without Congressional direction. I support efforts to ease these requirements through commonsense reforms, including by allowing States to apply for a waiver of an ADHS route's mileage limita-

tion if—as determined through the permitting and environmental review process—it exceeds the current ADHS mileage limitation.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Rebuilding our nation's infrastructure requires the development of a skilled workforce that can design, build, and maintain that infrastructure. As Co-Chair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education (CTE) Caucus, I recognize the importance and value CTE programs offer to individuals, especially those in infrastructure sectors, and it is important that they have a seat at the table. CTE programs and apprenticeships are proven strategies that equip individuals with the education and work-based learning needed for career success in these high-skill, in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Congress recognized CTE as an effective workforce development strategy when it unanimously passed my Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, reauthorizing the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in the 115th Congress. Since that time, we have seen a record number of students enrolled in CTE programs. We must continue this momentum by including workforce investments alongside infrastructure spending.

While I was pleased to see some acknowledgement of the importance of workforce development programs within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), I remain concerned that CTE programs, and therefore thousands of highly skilled workers, were largely left out of these discussions. In the years following IIJA's passage, it is clear that a skilled workforce is necessary to carry out federal infrastructure investments.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you include the following in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization:

- A stipulation that States devote a portion of infrastructure funds to workforce development programs, including CTE programs, with the flexibility to invest in such programs as appropriate for local infrastructure needs. States should coordinate these investments with the agencies that receive the states' funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act so as not to duplicate efforts.
- Dedicated resources for updating the facilities and equipment used in CTE programs of study in infrastructure sectors to ensure they are aligned with fast-paced, ever-changing industry expectations and standards.

BUS TESTING FACILITY PROGRAM

As part of authorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the Bus Testing Facility Program at the Pennsylvania State University—operated by the Thomas D. Larson Pennsylvania Transportation Institute—tests new transit bus models for safety, structural integrity and durability, reliability, performance, maintainability, noise, and fuel economy. These new bus models are tested before they are purchased by transit agencies, helping to address problems before the fleet is built, saving considerable money and time while avoiding inconveniencing passengers.

Since the beginning of this program, more than 530 new bus models have been tested, resulting in over 10,500 documented design failures. In Fiscal Year 2024 alone, the bus testing facility identified 175 deficiencies, including 57 structural, six road calls, and ten severe safety-related failures. By identifying these failures early in the production process, the program averted many fleet failures, saving millions of dollars in maintenance costs, litigation, and lost revenue.

I request the Committee reauthorize this program (49 U.S. Code § 5318) at no less than the currently authorized levels in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization. Without this program, manufacturers will not be able to sell new buses, transit agencies will not be able to acquire new buses, and consumers will be left with fewer options for transportation. Continuing to invest in initiatives like the Bus Testing Facility Program ensures a safer, more reliable future for mass transit throughout the country.

CONSOLIDATED RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (CRISI) PROGRAM

In 2015, Congress established the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the nationwide rail network. Since that time, the program has ensured necessary rail repairs and safety enhancements have taken place—often in rural communities, including those in my district, with projects that have been needed for years. In addi-

tion to these improvements, the CRISI program has funded rail research that ensures the United States can remain a world leader in technological innovations that help improve railroad infrastructure and safety.

With thousands of miles of short line railroad track in my district providing critical market access and transportation for a variety of businesses including farmers, energy producers, and manufacturers, I respectfully request continued support for the CRISI program in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE

The Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 made airlines the sole authority to determine which domestic markets would receive air service as well as what airfares passengers would be charged. Subsequently, the Essential Air Service (EAS) Program was established to ensure taxpayers in small, rural communities had continued connectivity to the entire National Transportation System by subsidizing commuter and certified air carriers.

This program is critical in rural America and has provided links to hub airports at over 175 locations throughout the United States and its territories that would otherwise lack commercial air service. With rural airports located in my congressional district, including two airports participating in the EAS program, I see firsthand the importance of maintaining this program for all Americans who live in underserved, rural areas.

Our nation's rural and small communities depend on commercial air service for transportation, medical supplies, commercial goods, and access to larger business markets. By continuing regular air service to these areas, Americans will continue to access necessary medical services that might only be available in larger cities, as well as increasing the economic opportunities and visitors to these communities. I urge the Committee to continue the EAS program, and I look forward to engaging on potential improvements to the program in the future.

Thank you again Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of this Committee for allowing me to express my priorities for this Committee in the 119th Congress. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to working together on these and other issues.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Norma J. Torres, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and distinguished Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share my priorities with the Committee as you begin this year's Surface Transportation Reauthorization process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of California's 35th Congressional District, which includes Fontana, Ontario, Pomona, Upland, Eastvale, Montclair, and Rancho Cucamonga in the Inland Empire—one of the fastest-growing regions in the nation and a vital logistics hub. The *Alameda Corridor*, a major freight artery, runs directly through my district, underscoring our strategic importance to the national goods movement.

I am appalled by the recent illegal cuts made by DOGE that are already having a significant impact on the Department of Transportation (DOT). These reductions limit DOT's ability to carry out essential programs, delay critical infrastructure projects and undermine long-term planning efforts. This not only threatens the safety and reliability of our transportation networks but also jeopardizes the economic growth of and job creation tied to federal transportation investments. Most concerningly, these funding constraints will severely hamper the development and scope of the next Surface Transportation Reauthorization. With these cuts, this Administration is not helping our communities build for the future—it is holding them in the past.

Instead, to meet our region's growing infrastructure needs, I strongly support full funding for *Regional Infrastructure Accelerators* in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization. These accelerators help communities like mine move forward on projects that improve freight mobility, expand transit, and enhance safety.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE INLAND EMPIRE:

- *Freight Infrastructure:* The Inland Empire is the most in-demand industrial and labor market in North America, with 16.1 million people living within 50 miles of the region's core. This robust population supports a warehouse/distribution labor force over 140,000 and is forecasted to grow by 17% over the next decade.

Modernizing freight corridors like the Alameda Corridor is essential to maintain efficient goods movement and reduce bottlenecks.

- *Pedestrian Safety:* In the Inland Empire, we are facing a troubling rise in pedestrian fatalities. According to the Dangerous by Design 2024 report, the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metro area ranks as one of the deadliest in the nation for pedestrians, with at least 797 pedestrian fatalities between 2018 and 2022. This crisis is particularly acute in lower-income neighborhoods, where residents rely more heavily on walking and public transit. Many of these communities are situated along busy freight corridors, where unsafe road designs and high-speed traffic significantly increase the risk to pedestrians. In response, in 2023, I partnered with Congresswoman Bonamici—who was a pedestrian that was hit by a car a few years ago—to introduce the *Pedestrian Hazard, Awareness, and Safety Expansion (PHASE) Act*. This legislation will combat the rising number of pedestrian fatalities in my district and across the country. The PHASE Act directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to identify and implement innovative traffic safety solutions. These efforts include improving traffic control devices and leveraging new technologies to better alert drivers, including those operating bicycles—and protect pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Additionally, the bill establishes a new DOT grant program to help cities, municipalities, and tribal governments fund critical pedestrian safety infrastructure—such as smarter crosswalks, expanded buffer zones, better lighting, and upgraded traffic signals. It also calls for a national study to explore physical design alternatives that can further protect people on foot or using mobility devices. To truly address this growing crisis, we need sustained federal investment in pedestrian safety—particularly in high-risk, underserved communities. Safer sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and traffic-calming measures are not just infrastructure improvements; they are life-saving interventions. I hope that my bill would be considered for inclusion in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization of 2026.
- *Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):* As housing costs soar and congestion worsens, TOD is a game-changer for the Inland Empire and other areas around the nation. By building housing, jobs, and services near transit, we can reduce car dependence, cut emissions, and give residents more affordable, connected lifestyles. TOD also helps revitalize commercial corridors, reduce commute times, and attract long-term investment to communities historically overlooked. TOD can revitalize underinvested corridors and create mixed-use, walkable communities that support small businesses and attract private investment. It also reduces commute times in a region where many residents spend more than 30 minutes commuting each way.
- *Wildfire Prevention and Infrastructure Needs:* As the Inland Empire and areas around the nation face increasing wildfire risks, we must prioritize funding for wildfire prevention infrastructure, including firebreaks, forest management, and fire response improvements. Strengthening our region's emergency communication systems, upgrading evacuation routes, and improving infrastructure to mitigate the damage from wildfires will better protect both our communities and our critical infrastructure.
- *Dig Once Policy:* I also urge this Committee to strengthen the Dig Once policy, which ensures coordination between utility and transportation projects. When we open a road, we should install broadband conduit, water lines, and energy infrastructure at the same time. It saves taxpayer dollars and minimizes disruption to our communities.

RAISE GRANT: FONTANA SUCCESS STORY

As you know, the infrastructure grant programs in the Surface Reauthorization are crucial to allow our communities to thrive. For example, the City of Fontana was awarded a \$15 million RAISE Grant for the “Building A Better-Connected Inland Empire” project. This initiative includes street, bike, sidewalk, and trail improvements along Cherry Avenue and Victoria Street, enhancing safety and connectivity for residents. The project aims to improve traffic flow, reduce commute times, and create over 7,500 good-paying jobs in the community. The RAISE Grant is crucial for this community, as it will also provide safer walking and biking options in a region where many residents rely on these modes of transportation. The success of this grant underscores the need for continued federal support to fund

projects like this, which have a direct, positive impact on the lives of residents while contributing to the overall prosperity and connectivity of the Inland Empire.

My District is a national logistics engine with local infrastructure challenges that require tailored, accelerated solutions. I urge the Committee to support Regional Infrastructure Accelerators, pedestrian safety grants, TOD investments, wildfire prevention and infrastructure needs, and full funding for the RAISE Grant program in the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to working with you to make these critical investments a reality.

