

**Testimony of**  
**Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.**  
**Infrastructure Member Day Hearing**  
**April 14, 2021**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to discuss the infrastructure needs of Georgia and the nation. The importance of investing in our infrastructure cannot be understated. Infrastructure is the physical framework upon which our economy operates and which our standard of living is dependent upon. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that the 10-year infrastructure investment gap now stands at \$2.6 trillion. We must take bold and decisive action now.

Deteriorating infrastructure across rural America threatens our position as a world leader in agriculture. The ability of our farmers and ranchers to meet domestic demands and compete globally depends on reliable infrastructure. I urge you to include robust funding for state Departments of Transportation so that our municipalities have the resources needed to improve our local roads, bridges, ports, and railways.

As you develop surface reauthorization and infrastructure legislation, we must also look to the future by continuing our leadership in clean energy technology. In the recently unveiled American Jobs Plan, President Biden set a goal to electrify at least 20 percent of our yellow school bus fleet. I urge the Committee to create a new grant program for local school districts to replace existing diesel school buses with electric school buses. A new grant program should be separate from the existing Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grants so that our schools have a dedicated revenue source to upgrade their school bus fleet. Schools with limited financial resources, particularly those in rural areas, do not have the financial resources to replace existing school buses without significant federal support. We must ensure that these schools have access to utilize a new grant program for electric school bus purchases.

Investment in clean energy infrastructure also requires a reliable charging station network across the country. Building a network of green infrastructure will require cooperation and partnerships between the federal government and private sector. I support President Biden's proposal to jumpstart clean energy manufacturing through federal procurement.

Additionally, significant investment is needed to ensure that every American has access to high speed broadband. More than 35 percent of rural Americans lack access to broadband at minimally acceptable speeds. I urge you to include investment in the infrastructure needed to close the digital divide. However, even with this investment, it will take years to connect every American to high speed and affordable broadband. We should provide immediate financial support by creating a refundable consumer tax credit for the purchase of a signal booster, mobile hotspot, or satellite equipment to boost internet speeds while we continue to build our broadband infrastructure.

Finally, I ask that you consider inclusion of a pilot program that would increase safety on roads and help mitigate climate pollution. This program would allow a limited number of states to permit operation of vehicles weighing up to 91,000 pounds gross vehicle weight with six axles on federal interstates. Allowing trucks to carry at this modestly higher gross vehicle weight, with a sixth axle for bridge formula compliance, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make roads safer for families and drivers, and minimize congestion on state and local roads. The CARES Act allowed states to issue temporary permits for trucks to operate above federal weight limits on the Interstate Highway System, easing strains on the supply chain. Data from these permits showed that the heavier configuration reduced carbon dioxide emissions and saved thousands of gallons of diesel and miles traveled without any corresponding increase in reportable accidents.

We have the opportunity to create millions of jobs for hardworking Americans by making a historic infrastructure investment. I believe that it is incumbent upon Congress to come together and pass bipartisan legislation that invests in our local communities at this time of great need. Thank you for your consideration.