



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Blumenauer".

**Testimony of Representative Earl Blumenauer Before the House Committee on
Transportation & Infrastructure
April 14, 2021**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today.

After serving as the City of Portland's Commissioner of Public Works, I had the opportunity to serve on this Committee for my first decade in Congress. Some of my best memories in Congress are serving on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and working in a bipartisan fashion to meet the challenges of America's transportation system.

When I last testified before this Committee nearly two years ago, the reality we face today was nearly unimaginable. In the past year, more than half a million Americans lost their lives from COVID-19, the economy was thrust into the worst recession in nearly a century, the climate crisis ravaged communities across the West, and America was forced to finally deal with centuries of racial injustice.

These developments necessitate a different response.

The solution to these interrelated crises is not the status-quo, it is a forward-thinking approach at a scale necessary to restore our global competitiveness, equitably invest in communities, combat the climate crisis, and create millions of family-wage jobs.

I was pleased to see President Biden's American Jobs Plan call for a historic \$2.3 trillion investment in upgrading America's infrastructure. This proposal rightly goes beyond bikes, roads, and bridges, it is the most consequential vision to rebuild and renew America in more than two centuries. This investment alongside a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill is a necessary step to building back from the recession and ushering in a more prosperous, clean, and just future.

I have long supported many of the proposals included in both the President's plan and in the T&I Committee's Moving Forward Act.

First among these is my work on expanding transportation options for individuals in communities large and small. The troubling increases in pedestrian and cyclist deaths in recent years requires that Congress increase funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program, target Highway Safety Improvement Program funding to dangerous corridors for vulnerable road users, and enact my Vision Zero Act to allow communities to spend transportation dollars on reducing traffic deaths to zero.

Transportation is the largest source of carbon emissions of any sector, giving this Committee significant influence to tackle the climate crisis. I hope you will continue to promote the work you did in H.R. 2 to integrate climate into every transportation program. I also hope you will continue to endorse an increased federal share for transit projects, an increase in the Small Starts cap, and my legislation to integrate bikeshare and micromobility into transit systems. By making our transportation more interconnected and more reliable, individuals can finally have realistic choices about their mode of transportation.

Too often, federal transportation policies have failed to solve problems and have instead created problems for future generations. Our transportation policies should focus on the future of transportation and give communities the tools they need for decades to come. This includes continued support for the state road user charge pilots and bringing the concept to the federal level through a national pilot, increasing the cap on the Passenger Facility Charge, and providing local policymakers with a better understanding of the secondary influences of autonomous vehicles.

The scale of the American Jobs Plan may sound large, and it is, but it is the result of restoring funding after decades of underinvestment.

Too often Democratic and Republican administrations have failed to lead on infrastructure. This is our moment to go big and be bold. By modernizing our public transit, investing in transportation electrification, redressing historic inequities, and fixing crumbling roads and bridges, Congress can rebuild and renew America to compete in the 21st century.

I look forward to being your partner on the Ways and Means Committee to produce a once-in-a-generation infrastructure investment.