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*Submitted Testimony for the Record
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Member Day
April 14, 2021*

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for giving me the opportunity to share my Transportation and Infrastructure priorities with the Committee today.

I served on this Committee for my first three terms, and I have a deep appreciation for its critical mission and essential work.

Today, I would like to summarize and submit for the record a document outlining the principles that I believe any infrastructure proposal should include, particularly those that address the needs of our small towns and rural communities.

Because I know you are working on a surface transportation reauthorization bill right now, I will focus my remarks on the priorities for that legislation. However, I hope this document will guide your work on all future infrastructure packages beyond the one immediately before us.

To build a strong foundation for a successful economy, our nation requires a significant investment. To do this, any proposal must meet three goals:

First –direct federal investments to areas with DEMONSTRATED need;

Second –STRENGTHEN programs that target support to rural areas and small towns, such as technical assistance;

And Third –MAINTAIN and EXPAND policies, like Buy American and Davis-Bacon requirements, that support America’s manufacturers and workers.

Looking specifically to surface transportation, we must balance our investments in new infrastructure with making sure that our existing infrastructure is safe and reliable.

For example, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association’s Bridge Report for 2021 found that my state of Illinois is home to the third-most bridges in poor condition in the nation. Over 10 percent of the bridges in the congressional district I serve are classified as structurally deficient.

Meanwhile, in 2018, more than 34 percent of major rural roads across the country were rated in poor or mediocre condition.

Families in the Heartland, like those I serve, rely on surface transportation not only to get to work or run to the grocery store, but also as an economic connection to the rest of the country.

Manufacturers, growers and producers all rely on roads, bridges and rail to move their products to market. Increased freight traffic on roads, coupled with everyday use, have resulted in significant strain on our most important infrastructure, making it critical that we invest more in our highways, bridges and rail, all while providing a sustainable funding source for the Highway Trust Fund.

Congress' call to address this lies not only in our economic recovery, but in basic public safety.

Promoting public safety also requires raising awareness of Move Over Laws. These laws vary from state to state – in Illinois, our

Move Over Law is known as Scott's Law – but many people don't realize that moving over for a stopped vehicle is more than a courtesy – it is a legal requirement.

After one of my constituents, State Trooper Brooke Jones-Story, was struck and killed during a routine traffic stop, I knew we needed to take action to prevent this needless loss of life. And as the wife of a sheriff, I'm grateful for the work our first responders do every day. I ask that this Committee continue to join me in working to keep them safe.

Last Congress, I appreciated that this Committee included public awareness campaigns for Move Over Laws as eligible expenses in highway safety programs in the Moving Forward Act. It is my hope that you will again prioritize this important initiative.

In closing, my parents' generation left us a world-class infrastructure system, but in order to build back better, we must look to repair the foundation we inherited, as well as build upon it. I look forward to working with you on these important

initiatives to meet that promise for generations to come, and hope that this can be a truly bipartisan effort.