**Statement for the Record**
**Rep. Ruben Gallego**

**Transportation and Infrastructure Full Committee Hearing on "Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member's Day Hearing"**

**May 9, 2019**

I urge the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to pass a bi-partisan infrastructure package to improve and modernize our nation's roads, bridges, dams, airports, schools, wastewater, rail, electrical, and broadband systems. Year after year, the American Society of Civil Engineers gives U.S. infrastructure a failing grade and concludes that it is unable to meet the demands of a modern, 21st century economy.

The longer we wait to make smart, cost-effective investments in our aging infrastructure system, the more it will restrict growth and the costlier it will become to eventually fix in the long-term. The time to act is now, and I am encouraged that there is support on both sides of the aisle to address this issue this Congress. I look forward to working with the committee on ensuring that Arizona's priorities, especially innovative water management investments, are included in any infrastructure package that it may consider.

The committee should also be aware of how important sustained transit and light rail investments through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grant Program (CIG) are to the City of Phoenix and the district I represent. These federal investments have been matched by elected representatives and local taxpayers who have voted repeatedly for dedicated transit taxes. Today, Valley Metro, which operates the transit system in the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area, serves nearly 4 million residents and over 16 million visitors annually.

In particular, a light rail investment will help connect residents in south Phoenix to downtown and the east Valley, creating affordable access to jobs, health care, education, and business. Since construction began in 2005, Valley Metro's light rail system has grown to 26 miles and 35 stations, which serve the fastest growing region in the United States that attracts billions of dollars of outside investment into our local economy. None of this would have been possible with without sustained federal investment and partnership through CIG. In fact, federal funding has helped leverage $7.6 billion in private and $2.5 billion in public funding to help modernize our transportation system, support local businesses, and create jobs.

I know that Valley Metro values the partnership with the FTA and is very pleased to have received a $75 million allocation for the Tempe streetcar project as well as engineering approval for the South Central LRT extension. Currently, Valley Metro is working with FTA on Letters of No Prejudice that would allow for the advancement of both projects.

However, I remain concerned that the Trump Administration's efforts to reduce the federal match for CIG projects could undermine important transit investments in communities across the country. President Trump's FY 2020 Budget Request for CIG states:

*"The FTA encourages project sponsors to provide an overmatch as a means of funding more projects and leveraging State, local and private financial resources including through the use of value capture. For large projects, the maximum federal share has been less than 38 percent in new FFGAs awarded since January 2017."*

Many of these projects, including projects that meet every single Section 5309 CIG statutory criterion for funding, would not be possible without at least a 50-50 federal match. I urge the committee to ensure that the Trump Administration honors the intent of the CIG program and ensures that eligible projects move expeditiously through the CIG pipeline, in accordance with federal law. Dramatically changing the federal match, especially for projects that are already moving through the CIG pipeline, could undermine important transit investments in Phoenix and across the country.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues, and I look forward to working with you as the committee moves forward with its work.