

TESTIMONY OF
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Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Transportation
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Transportation Officials**

REGARDING
**America Builds: Improving the Efficiency and
Effectiveness of Federal Rail Assistance**

BEFORE THE
**Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous
Materials of the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of
the
United States House of Representatives**

ON
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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Webster, Ranking Member Titus and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Garrett Eucalitto, and I serve as Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (Connecticut DOT), and I am currently the President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Today, it is my honor to testify on behalf of AASHTO, which represents the state departments of transportation (state DOTs) of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

After earning degrees in political science, government, and international relations and affairs, I started my career here in Washington, D.C., spending six years with former Sen. Joe Lieberman, where I championed Connecticut's transportation priorities at the federal level.

I moved back to Connecticut to work in the state's budget office, overseeing infrastructure policy, and later served as Transportation Program Director at the National Governors Association in Washington, D.C., helping governors advance transportation priorities. In 2020 I was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut DOT, before stepping into my current role as Commissioner in 2023.

Today, I have the privilege of leading one of Connecticut's largest state agencies. Our team of 3,300 dedicated professionals manages a nearly \$3 billion budget to deliver a multimodal transportation system that is safe, efficient, and reliable.

Connecticut is a small, yet mighty state that sits within the heart of the Northeast Corridor, one of the busiest and economically vital transportation systems in the world. The Northeast Corridor region is home to more than 50 million people, and growing, and represents the world's fifth largest economy. The Northeast Corridor region contributes 30 percent of all U.S. jobs and generates 20 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. Each day, this essential backbone of American mobility carries more than 750,000 passengers and 70 freight trains – serving as a lifeline for our economy and our communities. The Northeast Corridor, with its 457 miles of track, 17 tunnels, and over 1,100 bridges, is not only an engineering marvel of the past, but an American asset that demands renewed commitment today.

Rail is critical to the state of Connecticut, and a key component of Connecticut DOT's infrastructure and operations portfolio. With over 230 route miles of passenger rail, half of which is owned by Connecticut DOT, and 582 miles of freight rail, with forty percent owned by Connecticut DOT, we invest heavily in railroad infrastructure to keep our economy moving. Connecticut DOT also owns over 400 pieces of rolling stock to support the passenger rail operations that crisscross the state. More than 43 million people and 2.9 million tons of weight move by rail within and through Connecticut annually. The Connecticut DOT supports a range of passenger rail services, ensuring access and mobility for tens of thousands of daily commuters and travelers across the region. Just like our interstate highway system, our state's rail system is a key component of the nation's overall transportation infrastructure and economy, and we depend on a strong federal partnership.

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The nation's infrastructure is interconnected, crisscrossing state lines and regions. The successes playing out in Connecticut and throughout the country would not be possible without federal support. I would like to extend AASHTO's utmost gratitude to you and your colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials (Subcommittee) for your dedicated and tireless leadership on surface transportation policy and in your oversight of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) implementation. As AASHTO members look forward to the reauthorization of surface transportation programs prior to the IIJA's expiration in September 2026, the nation's state DOTs want to thank this Subcommittee and Congress for the sound policy and stable funding provided through this multiyear bill.

As this Subcommittee continues to work on the reauthorization of surface transportation programs, I want to discuss the following topics as part of my testimony today:

- Provide an overview of the IIJA rail program successes
- Provide an overview of the challenges state DOTs have experienced since the passage of the IIJA
- Provide an overview of the rail program policy recommendations currently being considered by AASHTO members

OVERVIEW – INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA) RAIL SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

The IIJA provided historic investment in our rail transportation system, with \$102 billion in federal rail funding from Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026.¹ This infusion of investment has been critical to state DOT passenger and freight rail efforts. This funding was split mainly across the Amtrak National and Northeast Network, the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program, the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program, and the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Northeast Corridor and National Grant Program (including the Corridor Identification and Development Grant Program). As state departments of transportation have worked to deliver IIJA-funded rail projects, successes and challenges have emerged.

As a result of the IIJA, 19 federal grants worth over \$2.3 billion have been allocated for rail improvement projects in Connecticut. Years of deferred projects, including many listed on the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Major Backlog Projects list, are now moving forward.

Of note, we are making progress replacing our aging, deteriorated moveable bridges, including the 129-year-old Norwalk River Railroad Bridge, known locally as the WALK Bridge, and the 119-year-old Devon Railroad Bridge in Stratford and Milford. Led by our partners at Amtrak, crews are also currently replacing the 118-year-old Connecticut River Bridge, which connects

¹ *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act information from Fra.* Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Information from FRA | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/IIJA>

Connecticut's shoreline towns of Old Lyme and Old Saybrook to Rhode Island and beyond.

We are modernizing the New Haven Line power system by replacing outdated equipment. We are reconstructing rail overpass bridges, enhancing security infrastructure, and upgrading all tracks on the New Haven Line to meet modern safety standards. We are expanding the Hartford Line by restoring a second track through the entire corridor from New Haven to Springfield, Massachusetts, to boost both frequency and speed of passenger service.

The Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program has been instrumental in funding these crucial projects that not only reduce the state's repair backlog but also improve performance and pave the way for both new and expanded intercity passenger rail services, including those operated by private entities.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA) RAIL SUCCESSES

An overarching key success of the IIJA was the inclusion of a dedicated rail title with significant levels of authorized federal funding. These landmark funding levels have allowed state DOTs and freight railroads to actualize years of rail planning. The beneficial economic and social impacts of these investments highlight the need for continued federal support for rail program funding in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill.

State DOTs are committed to improving safety throughout the transportation system. This includes working with the rail industry to manage the many concerns that arise from rail-highway crossings. The IIJA included several programs dedicated to addressing this issue.

The creation of the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program in the IIJA and the implementation of beneficial changes to the Federal Highway Administration's Section 130 Railway-Highway Program are key examples. The Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program provided an additional stream of federal funding focused on rail crossing safety improvements, which has accelerated the speed with which state DOTs can make rail safety improvements.²

There are many important examples of projects around the country that are benefiting from these programs.

The Texas DOT received a Fiscal Year 2022 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program award for the US 90 Grade Separation Project. The project will support the construction of two at-grade rail crossings. It will close the at-grade crossing along Waco Street and build a grade-separated bridge to eliminate the US 90 highway-rail crossing over existing Union Pacific Railroad tracks.³

² *Railroad crossing elimination grant program*. Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/railroad-crossing-elimination-grant-program>

³ *Railroad crossing elimination (RCE) program FY2022 selections*. Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Program FY2022 Selections | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/railroad-crossing-elimination-rce-program-fy2022-selections>

The Michigan DOT received a Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program award for the Grade Separation of M-85 and Canadian National (CN) Railroad Project. The ‘project will eliminate a dangerous at-grade crossing on one of the Downriver Region’s busiest traffic corridors, where freight tracks intersect with highway and pedestrian rights-of-way at M-85, a critical north-south route between Detroit and Trenton.’⁴

The Connecticut DOT received two Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program awards for two high-risk grade crossings in the state. One \$400,000 award is being used to study the feasibility of closing the existing at-grade crossing at Toelles Road (FRA Crossing #500637X) on the Hartford Line rail corridor and construct a new roadway bridge to carry Toelles Road over the Amtrak-owned Hartford Line and U.S. Route 5 (U.S. 5). The Toelles Road at-grade crossing is Connecticut’s #1 ranked crossing on the FRA’s Accident Prediction Report. Between January 2019 through July 2024, there were 207 calls for service and 39 police department incidents at the Toelles Road crossing.

Another grant of \$2.4 million was awarded to study alternative options and develop preliminary engineering plans for the consolidation of crossings on the state-owned Metro-North Railroad (MNR) Danbury Branch in Norwalk and Danbury, CT. Despite prior improvements and ongoing education and outreach efforts, collisions continue to occur, including a tragic and fatal crash at the Commerce Street crossing in 2023

In addition, the IIJA modified the Section 130 Railway-Highway Program by changing the federal cost share to 100 percent and increasing flexibility with how funds can be applied.⁵ Enhancements to the Section 130 Railway-Highway Program have allowed states the flexibility to address railway-highway safety in a way that meets each state's unique needs.

Funding from the Section 130 program is helping improve safety around rail crossings across the country, including in Connecticut through the installation of new vehicular gates and railroad flashers, upgraded traffic control signals with railroad pre-emption, installation of pavement markings, and much more. Section 130 funding has been put to good use at the Connecticut DOT; there are nearly twenty projects in design or in construction, and one recently completed project was in North Canaan, where we replaced crossing surfaces and made geometric improvements at freight rail grade crossings on U.S. Routes 7 & 44, accompanied by sidewalks and gates and bells.

Another success from the IIJA was the inclusion of the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program and the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID)

⁴ *FY23-24 railroad crossing elimination (RCE) grant program selections*. FY23-24 Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant Program Selections | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/FY23-24-RCE-Grant-Program-Selections>

⁵ *Rail-Highway Crossings Program Questions & Answers guidance*. Rail-Highway Crossings Program Questions & Answers Guidance | FHWA. (n.d.). <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip/xings/rail-highway-crossings-program-questions-answers-guidance>

Grant Program.⁶ The Corridor ID grant program creates a pipeline of projects that are ready for capital investment through programs like the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program. Each project in the current Corridor ID inventory and projects selected under the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program have significant, discernible positive impacts on communities and state economies.

This program has also provided key support for rail projects in several states.

The North Carolina DOT received a Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program award for the North Carolina – Raleigh to Richmond (R2R) Innovating Rail Program. The ‘project is part of a phased effort to develop a new passenger rail route between Raleigh, NC, and Richmond, VA, along the CSX Transportation “S-Line” as part of the Southeast Corridor connecting North Carolina with Virginia, Washington, D.C., and the Northeast Corridor. The project involves completion of final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction activities to build additional parts of the Southeast Corridor from Raleigh to Wake Forest, NC, including new and upgraded track, eleven grade separations, and closure of multiple at-grade crossings.’⁷

The Florida DOT received a Fiscal Year 2022 Corridor ID Grant Program award for the proposed Jacksonville, Orlando, and Miami corridor. The ‘proposed corridor would provide new or enhanced service on one or more existing alignments.’⁸

Additionally, the IIJA succeeded in providing Amtrak with necessary stability through funding for the National Network and the Northeast Corridor.⁹ State DOTs with state-supported intercity passenger rail benefit when Amtrak has sufficient federal funding and the IIJA has provided this stability while also working to address accountability through forums such as the State Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC) and the Northeast Corridor Commission.

Amtrak secured a 2023 Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant to replace the aging Connecticut River Bridge with a modern, moveable structure south of the current one. This long-awaited replacement comes after the bridge, built in 1907, was deemed "structurally deficient" in 2006 and was at risk for 15 years due to chronic underfunding.

⁶ *Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) grant program*. Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Grant Program | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/federal-state-partnership-intercity-passenger>

⁷ *FY22-23 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (national) selections*. FY22-23 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (National) Selections | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy22-23-FSP-National-rail-program-selections>

⁸ *FY22 Corridor Identification and Development Program selections*. FY22 Corridor Identification and Development Program Selections | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy22-CID-program-selections>

⁹ FRA . (n.d.). Amtrak Annual Grant Program Fact Sheet. https://railroads.dot.gov/sites/fra.dot.gov/files/2025-01/Amtrak%20Annual%20Grants%20fact%20sheet_1.23.25_PDFa.pdf

The new bridge will boost safety and speed for passengers by 55 percent on the Northeast Corridor's Acela Express, Northeast Regional, and Shore Line East. Amtrak received more than \$800 million in grant funds for this project, and the remainder of this historic \$1.3-billion project is funded by Amtrak and the state of Connecticut.

These bold investments are transforming passenger rail service along the Northeast Corridor.

The IIJA also provided robust funding for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program.¹⁰ The CRISI program funding has a wide array of eligible uses and has bolstered states' ability to grow freight connectivity and enhance safety.

Here are some examples of how state DOTs are using this program to provide much-needed mobility benefits:

The Colorado DOT was awarded a grant under the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 round of funding for the CRISI Grant Program. The 'project will design, install, and test PTC on a portion of the Front Range Subdivision, including constructing a new siding. Additionally, the project will improve several railroad crossings at five high-priority locations along the Subdivision. This will enhance safety and efficiency, as the project will reduce crashes, increase travel-time savings, and increase economic savings.'¹¹

The Georgia DOT received a Fiscal Year 2023-2024 CRISI Grant Program award for the CaterParrott Railroad (CPR) Short Line Upgrade Project. The project includes the 'rehabilitation and upgrade of track, bridges, and siding and construction of a new rail spur on the CaterParrott Railroad in Lowndes and Berrien Counties.'¹²

The Connecticut DOT has received two CRISI grants in recent years to help fund new stations along the Hartford Line, an inter-city rail line that is part of the Northeast Corridor. The new Enfield station benefitted from a \$13.86 million CRISI grant, while the new Windsor Locks station received \$17.49 million in CRISI funding. These grant dollars were instrumental in moving these two projects across the design finish line and into eventual construction. Also in Connecticut, the Housatonic Railroad received \$5.37 million to improve 18 miles of railroad and upgrade bridges, increasing freight rail capacity.

¹⁰ *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program*. Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/consolidated-rail-infrastructure-and-safety-improvements-crisi-program>

¹¹ *FY 2023-2024 consolidated rail infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program: Project Summaries*. FY 2023-2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program: Project Summaries | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy-2023-24-crisi-program-project-summaries>

¹² *FY 2023-2024 consolidated rail infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program: Project Summaries*. FY 2023-2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program: Project Summaries | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy-2023-24-crisi-program-project-summaries>

The inclusion of a dedicated rail title in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill will be critical to maintaining the current momentum of state DOT passenger and freight rail efforts. For Connecticut DOT, these programs have proven to be a critical component of our multi-modal transportation program.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA) RAIL CHALLENGES

One key challenge that state DOTs have experienced since the passage of the IIJA is the extended time it takes from a grant announcement and award to the signing of a grant agreement and eventual obligation of funds. I want to be clear: FRA faced a herculean task following the passage of IIJA, which included a 561 percent increase in rail infrastructure funding compared to the FAST Act. Not only did they have to hire hundreds of additional staff, but they had to stand up a significantly enhanced grant administration program, all while attempting to make awards to the states eager to get to work building. At the same time, states have identified numerous processes and procedures that could be improved to accelerate the obligation of funds.

One way to address this situation would be the creation of a more efficient process to approve pre-award authority for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grants. This would allow state DOTs to expedite project delivery and reduce cost escalations. The FRA defines pre-award authority as costs incurred after the award selection announcement date but before the grant is obligated.¹³ AASHTO members have been working to identify mechanisms that would increase the speed with which federal discretionary rail grant agreements are signed – not just FRA grants but across all USDOT modes.

State DOTs have also continued to experience challenges with project delivery and permitting requirements. Too often, these requirements can be duplicative and can unnecessarily delay the delivery of much-needed rail projects - with project costs escalating as a result.

AASHTO members believe there are reasonable modifications to project delivery and permitting requirements that could more efficiently and effectively move rail projects forward without doing damage to the environment. For example, Congress should direct executive branch agencies to fully implement the One Federal Decision process to speed up the review timeline for projects and improve the accountability for all parties involved in a project's development. Congress should also take steps to modernize the use of the National Environmental Policy Act – including by modifying the definition of a “major project” and “federal action.”

Additionally, with many large projects receiving funding from multiple federal partners, coordination amongst the various federal modal agencies should be improved, preferably with the agencies accepting their peer agencies' environmental reviews and quickly designating a lead oversight agency/project sponsor. These types of changes would better align federal resource

¹³ *Federal Railroad Administration answers to frequently asked questions about pre-award authority*. Federal Railroad Administration Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Award Authority | FRA. (n.d.). <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/federal-railroad-administration-answers-frequently-asked-questions-about-pre-award>

agencies' review and permitting actions that improve transportation and environmental outcomes while reducing delays.

State DOTs also continue to encounter challenges with the consistency of federal rail funding, and they would benefit from measures to provide more consistent funding to enhance planning and project delivery efforts. Stable federal funding is essential to maintain the flow of anticipated investment in rail transportation improvements, maintenance, and operations; the absence of this stability leads to project delays that escalate costs.

The process to reach a final agreement on FRA awards can take up to 18 months or longer, which accounts to virtually two full construction seasons. This is due, in part, to requirements for bi-weekly meetings with the FRA, which has proven to be time-consuming and results in a drawn out, less efficient, process. The FRA also has separate and different workflow provisions for various grant program terms and conditions. For example, Attachment 1 Terms and Conditions require multiple agreements and signatures, instead of one signature. Attachment 2 Terms and Conditions are transmitted via email, rather than using an online platform. The Federal Transit Administration utilizes a web-based automated system where all grant documents are housed in a shared platform; having a similar FRA module would eliminate back-and-forth emails.

As an example, the Connecticut DOT was notified in November 2023 that it was awarded \$465 million in the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program for Projects on the Northeast Corridor (FSP-NEC) for the Norwalk River Railroad Bridge; this is a project that began construction in May 2023. That grant was obligated by FRA in January 2025.

Additionally, there are improvements to the financial processing of grants that could make the process much more efficient for awardees. Grantees should be able to seek federal reimbursement at a defined percentage, for example, 80 percent federal and 20 percent state, and not based on the total project cost, provided the non-federal match is met. Currently, the FRA determines the federal share percentage based on the total project cost resulting in odd percentages carried out to four decimal places. This extends the federal reimbursement schedule and puts more burden on both the grantee and the FRA staff. Once the project is fully billed to the federal contribution, the grantee will continue with the non-federal share until completion and simply continue with all federal reporting requirements as required by the FRA Grant Agreement. This would continue to keep the FRA fully informed of project progress as well as expenditures throughout the life of the project. This would streamline the FRA reimbursement requests and ultimately require less FRA and grantee staff time for processing, aligning the FRA with the processes followed by the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration.

I want to thank the leadership of FRA for their openness to process improvements, and willingness to discuss efficiencies in the federal rail assistance programs, such as those I describe in my testimony. Over the past few months, Connecticut has seen several grant awards begin to

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advance, and state DOTs are aligned in the desire to more effectively put federal funding to work.

AASHTO SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

AASHTO has adopted an overarching vision for surface transportation reauthorization that covers state DOT work across the USDOT modal administrations. This overarching vision for surface transportation reauthorization calls for a world-class, multimodal transportation system that supports and strengthens the nation's transportation infrastructure for a strong economy with improved safety and mobility.

Achieving this vision requires the following:

- Federal funding stability: Stable federal funding is necessary to keep the pipeline of planned investments in transportation improvements, maintenance, and operations moving forward; a disruption to this stability will translate into project delays that increase costs, resulting in fewer projects per dollar.
- Formula-based federal funding paired with state contributions: This approach to federal funding reflects the proven federal-state commitment that ensures the flexibility necessary for each state to best meet its unique investment needs.
- Current funding levels plus inflation must be the baseline: The baseline for the next bill must grow from current levels and keep up with inflation to advance safety and mobility in a meaningful way.
- User pay principles for all vehicles: Congress should ensure all vehicle types pay their fair share to fund transportation and to sustain the Highway Trust Fund.

On this last point, I want to note that this Committee has started to discuss options for raising revenue for the Highway Trust Fund as part of its reauthorization process. The shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund is a serious issue and AASHTO members are grateful that the Committee understands this challenge.

As part of implementing that vision, AASHTO is currently looking at the following draft surface transportation reauthorization policy recommendations developed by the AASHTO Council on Rail Transportation, to include:

- Provisions to clarify that a state, or a political subdivision of a state, that provides equipment, track, right-of-way, or financial support for intercity passenger service, but does not operate the railroad, is not a rail carrier or railroad and not subject to the regulatory requirements applicable to railroads.
- Reauthorization of funding for capital and operating expenses for Amtrak Northeast Corridor and Amtrak National Network (including state-supported corridors) at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels, the indexing authorized levels to inflation, and the addition of eligibility for states for capital and operating assistance.
- Reauthorization of the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements

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Program at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels, maintenance of the current federal cost share, and clarification on eligibility for early project planning efforts.

- Further, that a set-aside be created from the CRISI Program for grants to states for eligible activities under 49 USC 22907. This draft recommendation directs the Federal Railroad Administration to consider state input when finalizing factors for this set-aside.
- Reauthorization of the Section 130 Railway-Highway Crossing Program at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels, in addition to maintenance of the current 100 percent federal cost share for projects. Further, the Council recommends an increase in authorized funding levels in relation to the Highway Safety Improvement Program.
- Reauthorization of the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels and to maintain, at a minimum, the current federal cost share for projects.
 - Further recommended is support for United States Department of Transportation efforts to modernize its National Environmental Policy Act procedures in line with other AASHTO recommendations, including providing consistency across the department through efforts like ‘One Federal Decision.’
- Reauthorization of the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Northeast Corridor and Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail National Grant Program at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels and maintenance of the current federal cost share.
 - Additionally recommended is the elimination of the 22905(c) letter requirements for railroad projects in cases where the operating railroad is not the owner of the rail asset but has an existing contract that includes maintenance responsibilities, to facilitate the delivery of projects for this program and other applicable rail grant programs. Additionally, clarification is requested to ensure that a 22905(c) letter is required only for construction, not preconstruction activities.
- Reauthorization of the Corridor ID grant program at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels, and that the current federal cost share is maintained.
- Reauthorization of the Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels, maintenance of the current federal cost share, and clarification on prioritization for projects selected through the Corridor ID Grant Program.
- Reauthorization of the Interstate Rail Compact Grant Program at no less than the Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026 levels and maintenance of the current federal cost share. The addition of a state or group of states as eligible applicants under this program is also recommended.
- Creation of a provision requiring that if the Federal Railroad Administration enters into an agreement with a state to conduct rail inspections, it must also include bridge inspections, if requested by the state.
- A study to be conducted by the Government Accountability Office examining whether a pooled insurance arrangement for public entities supporting passenger rail could be

implemented via an interstate compact or federal grant, with the identification of a trustee for funds generated for disbursement in the event of court-ordered liability.

- Reauthorization of the following Federal State Committees at no less than the Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026 levels:
 - The State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee,
 - And the Northeast Corridor Commission
 - As well as Operations Lifesaver
- Reauthorization of the Next Generation Corridor Equipment and Pool Committee (NGEC) at \$1 million per year for FY 2026 through FY 2030, and allowance for the establishment of a percentage set aside for the NGEC within Federal Railroad Administration capital grants awarded for the acquisition of passenger equipment.

CONCLUSION

AASHTO and its members continue to take seriously the responsibility to implement the IIJA and its historic investment in rail transportation. Thank you again for the honor and opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions.