

May 15, 2019
Testimony submitted to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
by Congresswoman Jahana Hayes

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony to the Committee. Transportation and infrastructure are vitally important to both me and my constituents, and I appreciate the opportunity to be able to outline my priorities for you.

Very few states are as diverse as mine when it comes to transportation. Connecticut is home to airports, train stations, major highways, and dirt country roads. But, Connecticut is also home to the 5th worst infrastructure in the nation. The need for robust funding for our transportation systems and infrastructure is no more obvious than in Connecticut, and continued funding support for all forms of transportation, from road to rail to pedestrian, is a priority for my constituents.

Of the 4,238 bridges in Connecticut, 332 are classified as structurally deficient, with repairs needed across the board. These repairs are estimated to cost over \$1 billion to complete. In addition, nearly 25% of Connecticut's bridges are considered outdated and do not meet current standards. With some bridges seeing as many as 145,000 daily crossings, the danger that these structurally deficient bridges pose can not be understated.

Among the many concerns I hear from constituents in my district are the need to properly fund the Highway Trust Fund and reauthorize the FAST Act. Ensuring the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund is essential to the success of our transportation system. The FAST Act, the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment, is set to expire on September 30, 2020. We must reauthorize this funding.

However, their concerns do not stop there. When looking at our infrastructure system, we must address the urgent need to make improvements to physical access to federally funded facilities for all Americans, particularly those with disabilities.

One of the main reasons for today's crumbling roads, bridges, electrical power systems and water systems is corrosion. Corrosion threatens the continuous operation of these systems and exacts a global cost of \$2.5 trillion. While some federal agencies and many state agencies utilize industry recognized anti-corrosion control policies, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) does not. I hope to see full inclusion of a corrosion control policy implemented at USDOT.

When looking to the future, effective planning solutions should address a variety of needs within the transportation system. That is why we must increase funding for transportation planning programs. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) need sufficient funding to assess an increasingly complex array of activities, including more planning based on performance-based criteria. When planning for infrastructure projects, we must ensure that they provide long-term benefits to the public; consider the

cost of the entire project, including design, building, and operation; are built sustainably; and engage local, state, and private investment as vital partners in a strong infrastructure plan.

Any infrastructure plan must bring all stakeholders into the fold and allow local municipalities with expertise in their respective regions to be at the table. That is why it is important that we increase funding for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP). This program provides states and MPOs the most flexibility to implement regional priorities. Increasing the allocation to this program will further enhance local authority in determining transportation improvements. Additionally, formula distribution of funds is more equitable and helps ensure all communities receive a level of funding needed to maintain transportation infrastructure and allow MPOs to set regional spending priorities.

In many areas of Connecticut, there is an inconsistency between the metropolitan planning area under the jurisdiction of an MPO and the Census-defined urbanized area. Regional planning areas have evolved over time and represent long-standing inter-municipal relationships and better reflect commute and travel patterns and transportation issues and needs. Census-defined urbanized areas are not consistently reflective of transportation realities. Making sure that our infrastructure system is nimble and able to adapt when needed is key to long term success.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to working with the Committee on these priorities.