

T&I Member Day Testimony
Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
May 1, 2019

“Thank you, Chairman Peter DeFazio and Ranking Member Sam Graves. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today’s Member Hearing.

“Yesterday morning, a number of us met with President Trump at the White House to discuss the importance of investing in twenty-first century infrastructure. This is an issue of major importance to millions of Americans.

“That is why it is one of the three core components of the Make It In America plan I’ve been proud to lead, the others being education and skills training and entrepreneurship. As part of that effort last Congress, I traveled around the country hosting listening sessions with Members in their local communities. What we heard everywhere we went was that the needs were massive, both to rebuild as life cycles near retirement and to get ahead of the challenges we know technological advancement will bring. We also heard how private capital has some role to play, but there is no substitute for robust public investment, particularly in those areas and on those projects that don’t promise the private sector profit.

“Everyone can see that roads, railways, bridges, airports, seaports, sewers, and water systems across the country are in desperate need of repair. That is true in my own Fifth District of Maryland, as well. Many of my constituents commute to Washington from both Prince George’s County and Southern Maryland in some of the worst congestion in the nation.

“Last month, the National Park Service had to begin emergency repairs on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway because of the condition of the road. In addition, after years of deferring maintenance and failure to invest in a sustainable funding source, the Metro system in Washington is facing real challenges. The General Manager is working to restore the safety and reliability of the system, but this process will take time.

“And communities across the country, including in Prince George’s County, have seen water infrastructure fail and cause flooding, and they’ve seen our nation’s infrastructure pushed to its limits by more frequent and more severe weather caused by climate change.

“Those are just current problems we need to address, but if we wish to remain an economic leader and grow for the future, we are also going to have to be proactive and direct significant investments toward expanding and modernizing our nation’s infrastructure. This also means expanding wireless and broadband internet, expanding the infrastructure for more electric vehicles, and taking steps to integrate more renewable forms of energy into the grid, including technologies to store and distribute the energy generated.

“In 2017, the American Society of Civil Engineers graded our country’s infrastructure a ‘D+,’ with an estimated need of \$4.5 trillion to meet our infrastructure needs in the near and long term. That’s why infrastructure remains a top priority for House Democrats. Investments in infrastructure are proven to help local economies attract new private sector businesses and the

good paying jobs that come with them.

“While we continue seeking ways to work with the White House, I hope the Committee will draw ideas from this hearing and put forward solutions that have broad, bipartisan support and that should be able to pass both the House and Senate and deliver results for the American people.

“I thank the Committee for the work it has already begun and look forward to seeing what it produces. And I look forward to working closely with those of you on the Committee and with other Members to introduce and advance Make It In America legislation to invest in twenty-first century infrastructure. Thank you.”