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Member Day Hearing
Submitted by Congressman John Larson

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for holding this Member Day and for allowing me to testify. I have had the honor of hosting Chairman DeFazio in my district along with his predecessor Chairman Shuster on multiple occasions. The Transportation Committee has a rich history of operating on a bipartisan manner and I am heartened to see that tradition continuing.

As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I was delighted that earlier this year the Chairman and Ranking Member testified in front of our committee. The Ways and Means Committee will be responsible for finding the revenue needed to fund these investments and we are committed to doing just that.

Infrastructure is neither Democratic or Republican, it's American. We have sadly allowed our infrastructure to fall into a state of disrepair. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives the state of our infrastructure a grade of "D+".

At the same time, China has been investing 8.5% of its GDP in infrastructure. The United States invests less than 1.4%, its lowest level on record.

Connecticut's First District is an example of a place with aging infrastructure that is in dire need of reinvestment. Hartford is home to the I-84/I-91 interchange, which is the largest traffic bottleneck in Connecticut, 2nd in New England, and 14th nationally.

It was built in the 1960's to accommodate the largest department store in New England, G. Fox and Company – which no longer exists. But the highway system that was built around it now divides the city of Hartford and cuts it off from its beautiful riverfront.

As we look at making infrastructure investments, we can't repeat the mistakes of the past.

That is why I have been advocating for tunnel proposal for the I-84/I-91 interchange in Hartford, similar to what Seattle recently did with the Alaskan Way Viaduct project.

The I-84/I-91 tunnel proposal would:

- Spur economic development
- Create jobs

- Reconnect neighborhoods
- Recapture the riverfront
- Shore up the levee system
- Relieve congestion
- Create multimodal transportation options
- Allow the city to remain open during construction.
- Create a vibrant urban core and a thriving region with economic opportunities for all.

Simply put, the benefits of such an investment are enormous. But our underinvestment in infrastructure is holding us back from building important projects like this one.

It's time for Congress to pass an infrastructure bill that will unleash transformative projects across the country like the I-84/I-91 tunnel proposal in Hartford.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member – let's go big on infrastructure. Let's not settle for half measures.

As the American Society of Civil Engineers has said, the nation needs to invest an additional \$2 trillion in infrastructure over the next 10 years. The need is there. My legislation from last Congress, the America Wins Act, would raise \$1.8 trillion over 10 years through a tax on carbon pollution. I think that is the type of proposal that will allow us to make the type of investments we need, but I am willing to vote for anything that brings in sufficient revenue to rebuild the country.

Let's rebuild our roads, bridges, tunnels, and transit systems. Let's build for the future with high speed rail networks and multi-modal infrastructure such as biking and walking. Let's invest in our airports, levees, drinking water, sewers, ports, schools, and more.

If China can do this, so can the United States.

Specially, I urge the committee to pursue the following policies:

- Let's go big. We should develop an infrastructure package that invests at a minimum, an additional \$1 trillion over current levels over the next 10 years – and we should aspire towards \$2 trillion. We need to commit the type of investment that will allow us to take on transformational projects like the I-84/I-91 interchange in Hartford, CT.
- It's time for Congress to reassert its Article I power over the purse. Instead of leaving all project decisions in the hands of unelected bureaucrats, the members who know their districts and vote to authorize billions of federal dollars should have a role in project decision-making.
- We need real revenue and real funding. That means working with the Ways and Means Committee to pay for the investment with ideally a 90/10 federal/nonfederal split, or 80/20 at minimum. Public-private-partnerships have a role, but they are not a substitute for real funding.
- Life-Cycle Cost: Projects like dealing with the I-84/I-91 interchange in Hartford cost billions of dollars up front, but the long-term benefits of making a smart investment in transformational projects far-eclipse the upfront costs. We should be looking to enact federal policy that takes into account the long-term benefits of infrastructure investment when considering which projects to build.

- The I-84/I-91 tunnel proposal involves economic development, a levee system, highways, transit, rail, and housing. I encourage the committee to explore policies that allow us to do a better job of looking at projects holistically rather than silo-ing them off between different agencies and modes.
- Multi-modal investment: we must ensure that federal funding is being invested in all forms of transportation, including transit, rail, biking, pedestrians, aviation, and waterways along with roads and bridges. This will make for communities that are healthier, vibrant, and sustainable. This includes taking into account the realities of climate change to ensure we are investing in sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

Finally, I would like to submit for the record documents from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Airport Authority, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments outlining their priorities before the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's jurisdiction.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I look forward to working with your committee on a transportation reauthorization bill and major infrastructure legislation this year.