

**CONGRESSMAN JOE NEGUSE**  
**HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**  
**MEMBERS DAY TESTIMONY**  
**April 14, 2021**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify today about some of my priorities within the Transportation and Infrastructure committee jurisdiction.

I represent a vast and diverse district, Colorado's Second, from Boulder and Fort Collins along the Front Range of Colorado up through the mountains. The infrastructure needs of my district are as diverse as the geography of the district itself, which is also rapidly growing. In my district and across the US, our infrastructure is no longer able to meet the needs of the population and is in desperate need of repair and further investments.

In Colorado, there are more than 450 bridges and 3,600 miles of roadway that are currently in poor condition. The state's infrastructure received a C- on its infrastructure report card, illustrating the dire need for these investments that we are talking about today.

**RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

I would like to start by talking about the importance of resiliency in our infrastructure. As many of us have seen in our districts, natural disasters are continuing to increase in number and severity, as a result of climate change. In the last ten years, extreme weather events have cost Colorado \$50 billion in damages. In my district, communities are still recovering from devastating flooding that occurred in 2013; and now from the first and second-largest wildfires in Colorado history that burned in Colorado's Second District last summer and fall.

We must prioritize resiliency when building and rebuilding infrastructure, to ensure that what we are building will be able to withstand the challenges of climate change. I thank you for the work you are already doing to prioritize resiliency, and I would ask you to consider including my *Climate Resilient Communities Act* in the

upcoming infrastructure package. This bill would require a study on the benefits to prioritizing resiliency at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). I was glad to work with you last summer to include this bill as an amendment to the *Moving Forward Act*, and hope to work with you again this year to include this bill.

### **WILDFIRE RECOVERY ACT**

I would also like to talk about the *Wildfire Recovery Act*, a bill I introduced with Rep. Curtis of Utah as a result of the large fires Colorado--and many communities in the West--experienced last year. Driven by community concerns about meeting the cost-share requirements for Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) from FEMA, which supports firefighting costs related to wildfires, this bill would allow for flexibility in the federal cost share for FMAG and direct FEMA to issue guidance for raising that cost share. For communities working to recover from wildfires and facing budget pressures, flexibility in the federal cost share for the FMAG program would be a great help, and I hope to also work with you on including this effort in the upcoming legislative package.

### **RRIF EQUITY ACT**

I would also like to express my support for legislation soon to be introduced by my colleague from Colorado, Representative Perlmutter, which would provide a fix for an issue with the Railroad Rehabilitation Improvement and Financing (RRIF) grant program that we have been working with your committee on the last few years. Despite having repaid their entire loan, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Colorado is unable to get their Credit Risk Premium (CRP) returned to them until every grantee from their loan cohort has repaid their loans.

Last year, a fix for this issue was included in the House-passed appropriations bill, but unfortunately it was not included in the final Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations package. I am supportive of this bill my colleague introduced, and efforts to ensure RTD and others in their loan cohort can receive their Credit Risk Premium once they've repaid their entire loan.

## **TRAIN HORNS AND QUIET ZONES**

Another issue of importance in my district is that of train horn noise and Quiet Zones. Last year, I also worked with your committee to include an amendment studying train horn noise and additional measures that can be used to qualify for Quiet Zones. The Quiet Zone process can be arduous and confusing for cities and counties working on these applications, and this amendment would provide needed clarity for those communities. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these efforts, as we look for ways to reduce the burden on communities and increase transparency surrounding the Quiet Zone process.

## **CLOSING**

In closing, thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify before you today. I additionally want to thank you for the many opportunities you have provided for members to engage in the infrastructure and surface transportation reauthorization process, and the exciting opportunities provided with Member Designated Projects.

I am glad we will be building off of last year's Moving Forward Act, which included key investments in built infrastructure such as roads, bridges, transit, and railroads, but also included funding for school buildings and other important infrastructure. Our infrastructure is in dire need of investment across the board, and I am excited about the opportunities ahead of us to craft a comprehensive infrastructure package that meets the needs of the American people.

Thank you, and I yield back.