

House Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day Testimony
Representative Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA)
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Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, it is a privilege to testify before you today on a variety of issues of concern to my district.

The Fifth District of Pennsylvania, my district, is a major transportation corridor for the Northeast United States and is also home to large transportation and infrastructure entities such as the Philadelphia International Airport, PhilaPort, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, the Philly Shipyard, and the Philly Navy Yard. Thousands of my constituents work in these industries and rely on continued investment in them in order to provide for their families.

In April, I hosted a Transportation and Infrastructure forum in my district, bringing together many interested parties to discuss the needs of our region that would come out of a large federal infrastructure package. These included the CEO Council for Growth – a major industry consortium in Philadelphia – as well as labor leaders, engineering firms, and other local groups.

The hearing touched on all aspects of infrastructure improvements, from improving roads and bridges to providing funding for public school infrastructure and ensuring we have a trained workforce ready to get to work as soon as possible.

When you're looking at all of the ways to write this bill, I encourage you to take a look at how Pennsylvania dealt with infrastructure in 2013. Pennsylvania is a prime example of how we can work together in a bipartisan manner to address our most pressing infrastructure needs. When Act 89 was signed into law in 2013, it provided a roadmap for what the federal government can achieve if both sides come together to do what's best for all of our communities.

Act 89 resulted in the advancement of 2,600 transportation projects across the state. These projects didn't just improve Pennsylvania's roads, they invested in local economies across the state and provided thousands of jobs to Pennsylvanians.

We know that for every dollar spent on infrastructure, we see somewhere in the neighborhood of three dollars in return. Infrastructure is truly one of the smartest investments we can make as a nation and will benefit every single community in the United States.

Among the many concerns I hear from my district are the need to properly fund the Highway Trust Fund and Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, reauthorize the FAST Act, remove or adjust the cap on the Passenger Facility Charge, and ensure that any repairs or construction is completed by a well-trained local workforce.

I am heartened by the preliminary discussions by the Administration and Congressional leadership, but the longer we wait the more our communities will continue to erode. The American Society of Civil Engineers rated Pennsylvania's infrastructure at "C Minus," slightly better than the nation's overall grade of "D Plus," but not enough to assure our constituents that we are doing all we can to help fix these problems.

But it is not enough to rebuild our infrastructure the way we had done it decades before. We have learned a lot about environmentally-sustainable building practices, and it is critical that these technologies are prioritized in an infrastructure package.

I am hopeful that any infrastructure bill that comes out of this House has significant direct federal investment into our communities, and the ability to leverage private dollars to make necessary improvements. I would further urge the Committee to allow major transportation entities such as airports to come up with infrastructure funding parallel to a

federal plan. In the case of airports, one such way that airports can raise revenue to make necessary improvements is by adjusting the cap on the Passenger Facility Charge.

Adjusting the cap on the PFC would allow airports like PHL to grow, to be economic drivers, to increase competition, and to invest billions in our airports without laying the burden on taxpayers.

Given how fraught discussions have already been with regards to raising revenues to pay for infrastructure investments, it would be in all of our best interest to allow responsible entities that are able to raise revenues for infrastructure improvements to do so without artificial federal caps.

Grant programs such as INFRA and BUILD have also been useful tools for funding infrastructure initiatives in my district, and I would encourage the Committee to continue to fund these programs.

The most important investment that we can make is in our people and particularly, in our youth. That is why I believe school infrastructure investments should be included in any infrastructure package - including language, such as that in Representative Bobby Scott's Rebuild America's Schools Act, that would help provide long-term improvements to our public schools, alleviating overcrowding and inadequate learning conditions and helping prepare students for a 21st century jobs.

Thank you all very much for your time today, and I wish you the best of luck as you take on this necessary and ambitious challenge.