

Thank you Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee for providing me the opportunity to testify today. I also want to thank my good friends and colleagues from New Jersey, Reps. Malinowski, Payne, and Sires, for their outstanding work to support our state's priorities on this Committee.

I want to speak today about an issue that is critical to my district's economy and the quality of life of my constituents - the Gateway Tunnel Project. But Gateway is not just a local or regional issue, it is critically important to the entire nation's transportation network and economic health. The Northeast Corridor is the most heavily trafficked rail corridor in the nation and is essential to the travel of almost a million people every day. Gateway is the linchpin at the center of that system. But the Hudson River tunnel it currently relies on is now over a century old and was severely damaged during Superstorm Sandy, creating the risk for a devastating shutdown.

According to a 2019 impact study, such a shutdown would cost the US economy \$16 billion over 4 years, reduce property values by \$22 billion in New Jersey alone, and cost \$7 billion in lost revenue to all levels of our government. A shutdown means more pollution, longer commutes, and increased motor vehicle accidents - further harming the single most economically productive region in our country.

It also means the increased stress when a parent is contending with a delayed train while trying to pick up their kids from daycare or make it home to see a soccer game.

I have personally examined the damage to the tunnels and saw the exposed rebar, crumbling walls, and corroded wires left by the Hurricane. Maintenance crews are able to do basic upkeep for a few hours every night, but it is simply not enough to fix the underlying damage. We have already delayed a structural fix for years and allowed the tunnel to continue to deteriorate. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer while hoping a shutdown doesn't occur.

The Gateway Tunnel project would modernize and improve the Northeast Corridor system and minimize the risk of this potentially catastrophic failure. It would be a transformative infrastructure improvement for the nation's busiest rail corridor, and would create significant resiliency and efficiency improvements for the entire Northeast Corridor. That's why I've worked so hard since my first day in office to expedite the funding and approvals needed to finally complete the project.

This hasn't been easy over the past few years. The previous administration was an active impediment in our efforts to finish the project. They continually missed deadlines for approving the project, leading to heavy delays in planning and construction that put our regional economy at even greater risk.

I was thrilled to hear Transportation Secretary Buttigieg echo my priorities when he expressed his desire to move forward with Gateway during his Senate confirmation hearings, and the Biden administration recently announced that they will be moving forward with the approval process

for the Gateway Tunnel project. Furthermore, the administration's infrastructure proposal includes \$80 billion for passenger rail, with a specific set aside for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, as well as \$25 billion for complex projects of regional and national significance. Both of these provisions could provide the financing that we critically need to complete Gateway.

This funding strongly aligns with the priorities that this Committee outlined through its landmark infrastructure reform package, the Moving Forward Act. I was so proud to vote for that bill last year because it recognized the necessity of upgrading and modernizing our rail system, and I want to thank the Committee for all of the work that you put into crafting that legislation. The Moving Forward Act contained several funding provisions that could be used to support the completion of Gateway. This included \$29 billion for Amtrak (with \$13 billion going to the Northeast Corridor), \$19 billion for the Passenger Rail Improvement, Modernization, and Expansion (PRIME) grant program, \$9 billion for the Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program, and \$7 billion for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program.

As Congress begins negotiations over this infrastructure package, therefore, I urge you to prioritize capital financing for major projects that are significant to the entire nation, such as Gateway. The new Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program in the Moving Forward Act is exactly the type of fund that Gateway needs, and that program is remarkably similar to the \$25 billion included in President Biden's proposal for ambitious projects with benefits to the regional or national economy, but that are too large or complex for existing funding programs.

It is my hope that this new funding from Congress, alongside the Administration's strong willingness to take Gateway to the finish line on the regulatory side, will enable us to finish this long overdue and desperately needed project. At a time when the northeast region is still in the early stages of our economic recovery after being the first states hit by the pandemic, this project will create thousands of jobs and create significant new efficiencies that will help to power our economic recovery.

I am so appreciative of the tremendous leadership that this Committee has demonstrated in support of Gateway over the past three years, and look forward to engaging with all of you on this critical issue. This is an issue that is central to so many families and businesses in my district, and I will continue to advocate for them until we have completed Gateway.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.