

**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE JACKIE WALORSKI
INDIANA'S SECOND DISTRICT
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I), I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony to highlight my infrastructure priorities since I was unable to testify before the committee due to a scheduling conflict.

As a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, which recently held a hearing entitled "Our Nation's Crumbling Infrastructure and the Need for Immediate Action," I had the honor of hearing testimony from both the Chairman and Ranking Member with many good ideas on how we can improve our nation's infrastructure. I want to let the Committee know that I am an eager partner in the effort to address our nation's aging infrastructure needs. Ensuring we have the best infrastructure in the world will help our economy move goods, services, and people. We need an all-of-the-above approach that includes creative solutions to finance our nation's infrastructure while leveraging technology, choosing cost-effective projects, reforming permitting requirements to prevent project delays, distinguishing between what is rightly a federal vs. a state and local priority, and ensuring safety on our roads. As the Committee develops an infrastructure bill to rebuild the backbone of the United States economy, we must also ensure that all Americans receive value for their tax dollars and that wasteful spending is stopped before it starts.

While much of the financing of any infrastructure bill isn't within T&I's jurisdiction, I do want to update the Committee on some of the work I've been doing on the Ways and Means Committee. As the Committee may know, public-private partnerships are among the most cost-effective ways to revitalize our aging infrastructure and invest in our nation's future. I recently

joined Rep. Earl Blumenauer in reintroducing the Move America Act, which would allow states to issue tax-exempt Move America Bonds to expand public-private partnerships and lower borrowing costs. Incentives for state and local governments to offer these bonds include flexible ownership and management arrangements, favorable tax treatment, and up to five years of unused bond carry-over. They would be allocated to states based on population. The bill would also create Move America Tax Credits to leverage additional private investment by enabling smaller states to trade in some or all of their bond allocation for tax credits at a 25 percent rate. Eligible infrastructure projects include roads, bridges, airports, rail, transit, ports, freight transfer facilities, waterways, sewers, and broadband.

Currently, the federal gas tax is not a long-term solution that will meet the funding needs of our surface transportation programs, in part because gas usage does not necessarily reflect wear and tear on our roads. I am working on a discussion draft of legislation to help permanently stabilize the Highway Trust Fund while reducing the issue around the donor/donee states. This draft proposal will examine creating a new structure for instituting a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax on class 7 and 8 trucks. The revenue captured by the VMT model would be placed in a newly created Highway Trust Fund account dedicated only to critical and urban freight corridors, ensuring a direct return on investment for those users. To ease the tax burden on those in the trucking industry, the legislation would repeal all federal truck taxes that are not fuel-related (the tire tax and 12 percent tractor tax). Moreover, as a means to further address concerns about a new fee, the plan would reduce the gas and diesel tax by 2 cents up-front while indexing these rates to inflation moving forward. Lastly, the bill would ensure parity for all fuel sources by imposing a new tax on electric vehicle batteries. This provision intends to ensure parity between roadway users in terms of their financial support of the system regardless of how the vehicle is propelled. I know this proposal isn't perfect, but I look forward to hearing from stakeholders and my colleagues on ways we can improve on this proposal once it's released. Due to our current fiscal situation, we need to eliminate our reliance on general funds to support a large part of our highway and transit spending.

The Committee should look at strengthening accountability by measuring real results and holding states accountable for the infrastructure dollars they receive from the federal

government. Accountability and improved transparency can be achieved by requiring the Department of Transportation to create a graded dashboard to track a state's progress on improving its roads and bridges. Improving transparency on how states spend federal funds for infrastructure projects will hold states publicly accountable and help ensure federal funds are spent effectively on critical infrastructure projects.

Project management is the driving force behind the delivery of major infrastructure projects throughout Indiana and across the country. Research from the Project Management Institute finds that 11.9 cents of each dollar invested in projects is wasted due to poor performance—that's \$119 million for every \$1 billion! But organizations that adopt project management best practices enjoy more successful outcomes and waste significantly less money than their counterparts that do not. To protect and safeguard taxpayer dollars, a policy is needed to ensure that all federally-funded infrastructure projects are delivered (1) in accordance with American National Standards Institute project management standards and (2) by certified project managers. These two commonsense, no-cost provisions will greatly improve project outcomes and ensure transparency and accountability to both Congress and the American taxpayers.

On October 30, 2018, three children in my district were killed by an oncoming driver who failed to stop as the kids were crossing the road to board their school bus. Illegal passing of school buses happens at an alarming rate every day in America. In the most recent annual one-day observational survey, 105,306 school bus drivers in 38 States reported 83,944 vehicles illegally passed a stopped school bus in one day. In response, Rep. Julia Brownley and I introduced the Stop for School Buses Act, which will help our states and local communities take the most effective actions to prevent illegal passing of school buses and ensure students are safe when traveling to and from school. The bill does not pre-determine any one solution but directs the DOT to look at all aspects of the problem and recommend the most effective solutions. I would suggest that the Committee include this legislation in any infrastructure bill, as it will help improve safety and prevent future tragedies. Ensuring children get safely to and from school every day should be a top priority.

My district is one of the largest manufacturing districts in the nation, and we also have a significant agricultural presence as well, which means we're moving a lot of products around the country and the world. I have many truckers in my district and farmers who have specific issues with the Hours of Service (HOS) regulations and want more flexibility. Last Congress, I cosponsored Rep. Brian Babin's REST Act, which would have required DOT to update Hours of Service regulations to allow a rest break once per 14-hour duty period for up to three consecutive hours as long as the driver is off-duty, effectively pausing the 14-hour clock. However, drivers would still need to log 10 consecutive hours off duty before the start of their next work shift. It would also eliminate the current 30-minute rest break requirement. Also, I cosponsored Rep. Ted Yoho's Transporting Livestock Across America Safely Act. This bill reforms federal regulation on how haulers transport livestock across the country by changing HOS regulations. I think these small improvements to HOS regulations will provide many in the trucking industry much-needed relief.

Marine infrastructure throughout the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basin region is a vital component of commerce and trade to the State of Indiana and my district. However, infrastructure in both areas needs reconstruction and repair. We need to continue to ensure that there are appropriate investments to rehabilitate the Soo Locks, rehabilitate the Saint Lawrence Seaway locks, and reconstruct strategic breakwater structures throughout the Great Lakes region. Another important part of this network is the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) that provides a connection between the inland river navigation system, such as the Mississippi River, and the Great Lakes, ensuring movement of commercial maritime commerce and recreational boating to ports in Northern Indiana. I am opposed to any proposal that would separate the Great Lakes from the CAWS as a way to prevent the migration of Asian Carp. I support many other tactics for fighting invasive species in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basin, but physical separation would negatively impact thousands of jobs in the region. The Committee should review the Coast Guard's management of the Great Lakes pilotage program to see if there is a need to modernize the Great Lakes Pilotage Act. Marine pilots are expert navigators and are necessary to ensure safe navigation. However, the Coast Guard may not be effectively managing the program in the most cost-effective manner. Ensuring the Great Lakes and inland waterway systems have a strong foundation of well-developed infrastructure will

ensure we have strong economic growth and allow for more commerce with the rest of the world.

As a member of the Congressional Composites Caucus, I believe it's vital we allow the use of innovative construction materials such as composites in appropriate infrastructure projects. The use of innovative, American-made materials like composites in projects has been shown to reduce lifecycle and maintenance costs and extend the service life. Composites offer a durable, sustainable, and cost-effective solution for many different applications, and I encourage the Committee to promote innovative construction materials as a way to rebuild our nation's infrastructure with innovative technology.

A strong American economy depends on a modern infrastructure built for the 21st century. I look forward to working with the members of this Committee, and stakeholders in addressing our nation's critical infrastructure. I want thank the Committee again for this opportunity to submit testimony.