

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to testify today as this committee looks at ways to repair our nation's crumbling infrastructure. I represent a district in the Commonwealth of Virginia that is in dire need of resources to modernize its aging infrastructure and relieve the congestion bottlenecks that afflict our highways. Most notable for my region is Interstate 81 - a road that spans six states, with over 300 miles of it in Virginia, and stretches the entirety of my district from Front Royal in the North to Roanoke in the South.

Thanks to America's strong economy, a growing number of people and businesses are utilizing our roadways every day. This includes not only folks on their way to work, but also trucks transporting goods through Virginia to the west, north, and south. This has been especially true since NAFTA was passed in 1993. As a regular driver on I-81 myself, I share my constituents' frustrations regarding constant delays and backups on I-81 that have plagued the region for years.

I-81 is no longer a road that passes through only scenic farmland and rural communities at the foot of the Blue Ridge mountains. It now stretches along vibrant cities and small towns filled with booming agribusinesses, technology companies, manufacturers, tourist destinations, and much more. While these strong local economies are a sign that I-81 is bringing jobs and prosperity to our region, the aging road has not kept up with the demands of users since it was first constructed over half a century ago.

In 2018, Virginia released the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan, which revealed what daily users know all too well. I-81 needs to be improved to meet growing demands. It is clear to me that the entire Virginia section of I-81 needs to be widened to three lanes along with interchange improvements to help with traffic flows. Furthermore, while I believe that the states are best positioned to allocate resources for projects to repair and restore our roadways, we must ensure that they get the federal funding that is appropriate for these Federal Interstate highways.

Each year there are nearly 2,000 crashes on I-81, with over 25% involving heavy trucks, and over 45 major crashes a year causing delays greater than four hours. Current conditions are not only a frustration, but a grave public safety concern. People are dying on this road and the failure to keep America's infrastructure up to par is costing lives. We must act to get America's roads moving again with public safety at the forefront of our agenda.

The I-81 improvement plan also highlighted that in the years to come travel will continue to increase and road conditions will degrade further. Moreover, by 2040 it is expected that there will be nearly 20 million truck trips moving three quarters of a trillion dollars' worth of goods each year along the I-81 corridor alone. This shows just how vital repairing our roadways is to the continued economic success of our nation. If people are unable to depend on our roadways to get to work and to transport goods, both our economy and our Nation as a whole will suffer.

While Virginia has made significant efforts to fund improvements, additional options to direct federal resources toward I-81 should be on the table. Failure to act is not an option, and I

stand ready to work with my colleagues to advance solutions to repair and rebuild our infrastructure to ensure America's next century is its greatest yet.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today, and I look forward to working with this committee as it moves forward with legislation.

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