

U.S. Representative Nanette Diaz Barragan (CA-44)

Testimony

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development

March 9, 2017

Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Price and Members of the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee, I want to thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony today.

I am Nanette D. Barragan and I represent California's 44th congressional district which includes San Pedro, Wilmington, South Gate, Watts, Compton and North Long Beach.

Most notably, the Port of Los Angeles, North America's largest seaport by container volume and cargo value, is in my district.

I am proud to represent thousands of workers that are directly and indirectly associated with the Port of Los Angeles.

The San Pedro Bay Ports Complex, which includes both the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, accounts for one quarter of the nation's cargo and it supports over 3 million jobs nationwide.

My message today is simple: I urge you to invest in our nation's freight transportation network, particularly on multimodal transportation.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has graded our entire infrastructure system, our ports, roads, bridges and rail system, with a D+, costing American families thousands of dollars each year.

The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that 95 percent of overseas trade moves through our ports.

With rising freight volumes, increasing population density and growing international competition, we need to maintain, modernize and expand our infrastructure, including landside freight connections that are necessary to move goods to and from our ports.

Competitive grant programs for freight and multimodal transportation like the FASTLANE and TIGER grants will improve congestion, air quality and help goods get to market faster.

In 2014, the FAST Act was enacted into law, making freight a national issue and the first time that ports and freight were fully integrated into the surface transportation network.

The FAST Act also established dedicated freight programs, including the Nationally Significant Freight and Highways Program, a discretionary grant program also known as FASTLANES which is authorized at \$4.5 billion dollars over 5 years.

The goals of the FASTLANE grants program are to increase U.S. global economic competitiveness, reduce congestion and bottlenecks, increase the efficiency and reliability of the highway network and reduce the environmental impact of freight movement.

I urge the Subcommittee to fund FASTLANE grants at the authorized amounts of \$900 million dollars for Fiscal Year 2018 and \$850 million for Fiscal Year 2017.

I would also simply like to mention that Congress should consider raising or eliminating the \$500 million dollar lifetime cap for multimodal projects like highway connectors and on-dock rail that are needed to move goods to and from ports.

I also urge the Subcommittee to fund “national infrastructure investment” also known as TIGER at \$1.25 billion dollars for both Fiscal Years 2018 and 2017.

TIGER is a multimodal, multi-jurisdictional competitive grant program that has leveraged \$700 million dollars for the freight network since 2009.

The port-related freight network is in need of \$29 billion dollars.

While we wait for Congress to consider an infrastructure package, we should invest to the fullest amount possible in the freight network, especially on multimodal projects.

Thank you for your time.