

Thank you Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of the House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

I'm here today on behalf of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of New Jersey to advocate for a fiscal year 2020 budget that invests in transportation and infrastructure, in particular public transportation.

America's infrastructure, once the envy of the world, is losing its battle against time, growth, weather, and wear. No state suffers more from underinvestment infrastructure than New Jersey where twice as many people use public transportation than the national average. To get to and from New York, 200,000 of us a day still depend on just two rail tracks across the Portal Bridge and through the Hudson River Tunnel, two structures that were a marvel when they were built, in 1910, but crumbling today. Virtually all passenger rail traffic moving up and down the northeast corridor depend on these two tracks.

On the Portal Bridge, it is particularly grating that construction has been unable to move forward, given the project is cleared to start, New Jersey has prepared its share of the funding, and Congress has already appropriated sufficient funds to cover the federal share of the project.

New Jersey Governor Murphy has released guidance concerning \$600 million worth of Series A bonds that will fund the state share of the project – my state has shown that it's committed to paying for this vital transportation infrastructure project in a prudent and fiscally responsible manner.

Meanwhile, for the past two years, Congress has appropriated extra funding to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, totaling \$720 million, with the clear understanding that this should enable construction of Gateway. But the Department of Transportation has so far refused to approve the necessary grants, in direct defiance of Congress's intent.

This initial phase of the project, the replacement of the Portal Bridge, has had its environmental review completed, and all the funds necessary to complete it are ready – only political roadblocks now stand in its way.

If we fail to repair this vital transportation corridor in time, we will be dealing a crippling blow to the economy of our region and country. According to the

New Jersey, New York and Connecticut Regional Plan Association, even a partial shutdown of the tunnels would disrupt not just passenger rail, but car and truck traffic up and down the east coast, making commutes virtually impossible for tens of thousands of people, diminishing property values, and driving away businesses in one of the most economically vital areas of our country.

One of the nation's most pressing infrastructure projects should not be stuck languishing on a desk at the Department of Transportation, yet that is where things stand today, and I see no prospect of that changing. Therefore, it falls to Congress to ensure that Gateway is not only funded, but built.

Last year, Congress sent a signal that this is what we intended. It is imperative that we do no less this year; indeed, a new Congress should do more, using every legislative mechanism available to us to get this project off the ground.

That's why I'm requesting robust funding for two vital programs that will provide the necessary resources for Gateway to be built: the Capital Investment Grants Program and the Amtrak Northeast Corridor.

I'm also submitting two language requests, one to ensure that the funding we're appropriating is being put to use and to make it harder for the Department of Transportation to continue making excuses. My other request would make it easier for New Jersey to finance its portion of the Gateway Project by allowing states to use federal transportation loans towards their share of jointly funded infrastructure projects.

These funding and language requests will help get us closer to our goal, ensuring no catastrophic loss and allowing the Northeast region to continue to drive economic growth for the country as a whole.