

Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin
Testimony
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Member Day Hearing: Member Priorities
May 1, 2019

- Thank you M. Chairman and Ranking Member for the opportunity to share my transportation and infrastructure priorities.
- M__ Chairman and Ranking Member, infrastructure, particularly when it comes to the state of Michigan's roads, is one of the most critical — and the most bipartisan — issues in Michigan's 8th district, and across our state.
- My home state of Michigan, perhaps more than most states, desperately needs a once-in-a generation federal investment in our roads and water infrastructure to be able to accomplish the hard work of repairing these systems to last.
- In these times of political partisanship and division, no matter where you stand politically, the disastrous state of our roads is something everyone in Michigan can agree on.
 - Michigan drivers spend an average of \$539 annually in automobile repair costs.
 - 38% of our state's urban roads and 32% of its rural roads are in poor condition.
 - Of the 901 bridges in my district, 115, or 12.8%, are classified as structurally deficient. We have seen in this country the tragedies that can occur when bridges aren't properly built or maintained. Repairing Michigan's bridges will cost an estimated \$205.1 million.

- What's more, roughly 1/3 of fatal traffic accidents are the result of hazardous roadway design or features, like potholes.
- But addressing our roads and bridges literally scratches the surface of the infrastructure challenges facing our state.
- It is also the infrastructure that we can't see: our water infrastructure systems are contaminated and corroded, and directly threatening the safety and security of our families.
 - Flint is a 20-minute drive from my district, and communities in the 8th district have begun to test their water, but don't have the resources to upgrade their systems in response.
 - Michigan is also confronting widespread PFAS contamination in our water — chemicals that we know are linked to cancer and other diseases.
 - In Michigan alone, high levels of PFAS have been detected at 34 sites, including at Diamond Chrome Plating in my district in Howell.
 - In addition, these chemicals have been found at some level in the municipal drinking water serving more than 2 million people around the state. PFAS has been detected in 54 Michigan schools, including five schools in the 8th Congressional District.
 - Last summer, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services issued an emergency “do not eat” advisory regarding all fish from the Huron River, from Milford in Oakland County to Base Line and Portage Lakes at the Livingston and Washtenaw county border, after fish from Kent Lake were discovered to have very high levels of PFOS.

- Let me be clear: I believe that access to clean water out of your tap is a right, not a privilege. And I believe it's an issue of environmental security that we need to treat for what it is: a homeland security issue.
- And when Michigan families can't be confident that the water they are giving their children to drink may make them sick or give them a learning disability; when they can no longer fish in the rivers or hunt in the areas they have hunted for years with their family — that is a threat to families' security, and to our way of life in Michigan.
- In other words, our infrastructure in Michigan has become a security threat. So what do we do to fix it?
- Luckily, we know that investing in our infrastructure enjoys broad bipartisan support. Both parties have said the right things on infrastructure — it's time to back that up with real federal dollars that can help states like mine.
- That means explaining to people how we're going to pay for that investment. If we don't establish a clear "pay-for," I believe we will have abrogated our responsibility to solve this issue.
- Private investors will only commit resources to build or maintain projects where they expect to get their investment, plus some profits, back. If we lean too much on the states or private investments, states like mine just won't be able to adequately address the security challenges that infrastructure poses.
- I ask that this committee, as well as our senior leadership here in Washington, consider Michigan as you undergo your appropriations and your work on this issue moving forward.
- 8th district residents are counting on you to provide real federal investment in our national infrastructure.
- Thank you.

