

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
U.S. Surface Transportation: Technology Driving the Future

Chairman Smith: Thank you Chairwoman Comstock for holding today's hearing.

The future of America's transportation systems depends on the effective development and use of new technologies. Technology enhances the capacity and safety of our roadways, railways, and other transportation systems. Technology can relieve traffic congestion and enable our pipelines to safely transport hazardous materials. This will boost economic efficiency, reduce costs and improve productivity.

The federal government's investments in the transportation network should be targeted to achieve desired outcomes. The Department of Transportation's current five-year Research, Development, and Technology Strategic Plan merges Congress' priorities from the 2012 transportation bill – commonly referred to as MAP-21 – with the Department's Strategic Plan goals.

It creates five research, development and technology priority areas for fiscal years 2013 to 2018. Those include: promoting safety; extending the life of future transportation systems; improving the movement of goods; reducing congestion and improving mobility; and protecting the environment.

If we focus on smart priorities, the investments we make today will improve the future of transportation. Cutting edge concepts encompass a broad range of information and communications technologies that have the potential to improve the safety, efficiency and performance of our nation's transportation system.

The issues before us today touch on all modes of surface transportation and impact every American. High priority research and development will not only help create autonomous automobiles and improve crash avoidance and other safety technologies, it will also lead to better roads.

Some examples include the use of nanotechnology to create new and better road surfacing materials and the development of new means of integrating multi-mode transportation. This will allow Americans to navigate the roads more easily and comfortably.

It is essential that we find a way to maintain a healthy, substantive research base for our state and local transportation initiatives. We have to ensure that Congress gets its priorities right and avoid duplication of research in order to ensure taxpayers receive maximum value for their hard-earned tax dollars.

This makes the Committee's jurisdiction over the research, development and technology programs at the Department of Transportation particularly relevant. I thank our witnesses today for making the effort to be here and for their knowledgeable testimony.