



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

FY 2016 Subcommittee Markup - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill April 29, 2015 Opening Statement As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. I want to congratulate you and Ranking Member Price, as well as staff on both sides, for bringing forward the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill for the Departments of Transportation and Housing & Urban Development.

Funded at \$55.27 billion, this bill supports key programs that will help ensure our airways and highways remain accessible and safe, and our Nation's most vulnerable citizens have access to affordable housing options. I'm proud this legislation strikes an appropriate balance by prioritizing programs that provide critical services to the American public while taking a targeted, thoughtful approach to reducing nonessential or inefficient programs.

We are all keenly aware of the important role transportation plays in our country's economy. Once again, the Highway Trust Fund is expected to run into the red this summer, but I am hopeful that a solution can be devised by our colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. In the meantime, this bill ensures that surface program funding levels are consistent with the authorized MAP-21 levels so that state and local agencies can plan their work, and work their plan. I'm also pleased that this bill includes robust funding for the Federal Aviation Administration to ensure that our airways are safe and to help increase efficiency and timeliness for all air travelers. To this end, FAA Capital Programs funding is targeted to NextGen programs promising the most immediate benefit.

The legislation provides ample support for initiatives that help provide access to affordable housing and counseling services for those who need it most. The bill includes \$19.91 billion in Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, which funds housing vouchers for low-income families, to ensure that all families that are currently served by the program will continue to be served. For Project Based Rental Assistance, the bill allocates \$10.654 billion, which will pay for a full 12 months of contract liability. Finally, the bill fully funds all elderly and disabled contract renewals to ensure that we maintain our commitment to our most vulnerable citizens.

We also support critical programs aimed at community planning and development. The bill provides \$3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program that is utilized by communities across the country to meet their unique community development needs. The Self-help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) and the Section 4 Capacity Building program are provided with \$50 million in this bill. In my rural district, the so-called SHOP program has allowed numerous low-income families to become homeowners by contributing

their own “sweat equity.” In addition, the HOME Investment Partnership program is provided with \$900 million in this bill. This important investment offers communities the ability to design and implement strategies tailored to their own needs and priorities. Many States and localities often partner with nonprofit groups to help build, buy, or rehabilitate affordable housing.

I thank the two of you – both new at the helm of this subcommittee – for your work and your partnership, and I support this legislation. I urge the subcommittee to promptly report this bill to the full Committee. Thank you, and I yield back.

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