

TESTIMONY
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BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND
RELATED AGENCIES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Chairman Price, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and for your strong support of the Department of Transportation and its vital mission.

We find ourselves in a moment of enormous challenge as well as tremendous opportunity. In this context, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan, which is already helping defeat the pandemic and get people back on their feet.

But we still have much more work to do if America is going to win the future.

I'd like to start by discussing our FY 22 Budget Request, which funds vital priorities for the coming year, and then turn to American Jobs Plan, which is a generational investment in American competitiveness.

The President's 2022 Budget requests \$25.6 billion in discretionary funding for the Department. As you know, this amount represents only about 30 percent of the agency's total resources. The planned mandatory spending will be released with the full budget in coming months. For now, let me share some highlights of this initial discretionary request, consistent with our priorities: safety, equity, addressing climate change, transformational investment, and economic strength.

The Capital Investment Grant Program has become increasingly popular throughout the country, supporting communities of all sizes as they work to build transit networks. Our discretionary request includes \$2.5 billion for Capital Investment Grants.

\$2.7 billion is requested for Amtrak, as well as \$625 million to help modernize passenger rail service and expand existing rail corridors.

The President's budget continues the successful and oversubscribed BUILD competitive grant program, with \$1 billion requested for these innovative projects. Just recently, we made the FY 2021 funding available, renaming the program as Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) to reflect our current priorities.

Finally, \$110 million is requested for a new "Thriving Communities" program to help eliminate transportation barriers and increase access to jobs, businesses, and schools.

This budget request supports many needed and important investments, and it aligns well with our longer-term goals.

But it is only part of the administration's vision for this moment.

If America simply returns to where we were before the pandemic, we will not win the future. Even before COVID, our infrastructure had fallen to thirteenth globally with a trillion dollar backlog of needed repairs. Nor is our current transportation sector built for the realities of the climate crisis.

Building back better means restoring and improving the foundation that enables Americans to thrive: our American infrastructure.

Two weeks ago in Pittsburgh, President Biden laid out his vision for a once-in-a-century investment. The American Jobs Plan would provide a more than \$2.25 trillion investment in American infrastructure, including \$621 billion for transportation and resilience.

The plan includes \$115 billion to modernize more than 20,000 miles of roads, and 10,000 bridges. It will double federal funding for public transit to provide affordable transportation options for more communities and reduce congestion and pollution for everyone. It includes \$25 billion to improve aviation, \$17 billion for ports and waterways, and \$20 billion for road safety. It proposes \$80 billion to address critical backlogs in rail and to expand world-class passenger rail services including high-speed rail.

It includes \$174 billion to help spark the electric vehicle revolution, building a network of 500,000 charging stations, providing rebates to make electric vehicles affordable for more Americans, and accelerating the conversion of our transportation system towards zero emissions.

We will rebuild our infrastructure in a way that not only is more resilient, but actually helps fight climate change. And 40% of the benefits of those climate and clean infrastructure investments will flow to communities that have been overburdened and underserved.

Now is the time to finally address major inequities—with \$20 billion to reconnect neighborhoods cut off by past transportation decisions —and to increase access and equity in projects going forward.

The American Jobs Plan will modernize how we travel, how we move goods, and how we live. It will make transformative investments, turning “shovel worthy” ideas into “shovel ready” projects, and seeing them to completion.

It will support millions of new, good jobs, the majority of which will be available to Americans without a college degree.

America has delivered big infrastructure visions before, building the Erie Canal, the transcontinental railroad, and the Interstate Highway System.

Those projects shaped our country, succeeding partly because each of them challenged America to expand its concept of infrastructure and deliver a better future.

Now it's our turn to build a safer, fairer, more prosperous America. If we meet this moment together, I believe we will one day look back with great pride on the decisions made in this critical season in the life of our country.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear today. I will be happy to answer your questions, and I look forward to working with you.
