

Statement of U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
February 4, 2015
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
Hearing on “Committee Funding for the 114th Congress”

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration in support of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure’s budget request for fiscal year 2016.

Our goal is to build upon the successes of what was a productive 113th Congress.

Over the last two years, our committee’s efforts focused on instituting common sense reforms of federal programs, cutting red tape, promoting the safe and efficient movement of goods and people, encouraging greater fiscal responsibility, increasing transparency in the federal government, and reducing regulatory burdens.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee logged over 120 meeting days, reported over 40 bills, saw nearly 60 bills pass through the House, and was responsible for almost 40 public laws and concurrent resolutions. Among our initiatives that became law were the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act, the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act, legislation to preserve the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund, a bill to reduce regulatory burdens in general aviation manufacturing, and the Water Resources Reform and Development Act – the first WRDA to become law in 7 years, and the most reform-focused bill of its kind in decades.

Our Members also conducted vigorous oversight of the programs and agencies within our jurisdiction, and worked to ensure those agencies did not exceed their statutory authorities. In addition to official hearings and roundtables, we sent 32 oversight letters to the Government Accountability Office and Inspectors General, and produced two in-depth infrastructure reports by special panels.

Our efforts also saved taxpayer dollars. For example, the Committee cut over \$2 billion dollars in leased federal office space.

I’m proud that we were able to accomplish a number of our top priorities of the last two years.

However, we have a much more extensive legislative agenda in the 114th Congress, including:

- A long-term surface transportation reauthorization that provides certainty for our states and other non-federal partners to undertake large highway, bridge, and transit projects;

reforms programs and streamlines U.S. DOT operations; gets Washington out of the way of innovation; enhances transparency and accountability; and provides greater value for the taxpayer;

- A Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization that lays the groundwork for the future of our aviation system, maintains America's leadership in this vital industry, increases efficiency and reliability of the system, reduces delays for passengers, and speeds up deployment of new technologies;
- A bill to reform U.S. passenger rail transportation, bring greater transparency and accountability to Amtrak's operations, cuts red tape, and help improve some of the Nation's most critical, century-old rail infrastructure;
- Legislation that builds upon emergency management and FEMA reforms we implemented last Congress after Superstorm Sandy;
- A General Services Administration reform bill that continues to save significant taxpayer dollars, reduce waste, and shrink the federal government's footprint;
- Any necessary measure ensuring that the EPA and Corps of Engineers cannot inappropriately broaden the scope of the Clean Water Act and upset the effective, long-standing partnership between the federal government and the states in protecting water quality;
- A measure to reauthorize federal pipeline safety programs;
- The next WRDA and Coast Guard bills.

In addition to our legislative agenda, the Committee will continue to implement its recently approved oversight plan to ensure laws passed in the last Congress, and other previous laws, are being carried out by the federal agencies as Congress intended.

In the last Congress, when the Committee was able to conduct its business outside of the Capital Beltway, through events such as field hearings, roundtables, and site visits to key infrastructure projects and facilities, it proved to be tremendously valuable to our Members and our communities. Unfortunately, our budget limited such opportunities.

In the 114th Congress, we are planning to take Congress to the People more often. Frequently engaging with state and local officials, stakeholders, and constituents in their own communities provides greater transparency, lets them gain a much better understanding of the work we do on their behalf, and allows for a greater exchange of ideas and input into the legislative process. This also allows our Members to more fully understand the practical, and sometimes

unpredictable, effects Washington's policies can have on the real world. And it simply leads to better legislation.

The Committee remains committed to ensuring that every tax dollar goes to good use, both at the agencies we oversee, and within our own offices. Understanding that we are in an era of constrained budgets, Ranking Member DeFazio and I have prepared a Committee funding request that we believe allows us to implement the Committee's extensive agenda, provide greater opportunities to take the Committee's work beyond the Beltway, and maintain an expert staff dedicated to serving Committee Members, the House, and the country.

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to present the Committee's budget. I would be happy to answer any questions.