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Testimony before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Submitted by Representative Earl Blumenauer
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Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today. Some of my best memories in Congress are serving on the T&I Committee. I left this committee, which I loved, to go to the Ways and Means Committee to ensure that the federal government upholds its end of the partnership to fund infrastructure—that is the jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee, to fund what you authorize. Our mission continues today, and I am hopeful that our committees can work together to deliver the infrastructure investments that the American people so desperately need.

It has been said there is no Democratic or Republican way to fix a sewer. This committee has long-exemplified that sentiment, and you have the opportunity to continue that tradition this year. Trump and congressional Democrats have made a commitment to the American people for at least \$1 trillion for infrastructure. The T&I Committee, and every other committee, should be laser-focused at achieving this level of investment in a comprehensive infrastructure package. I look forward to being your partner on the House Ways and Means Committee to invest in infrastructure by raising the gas tax, creating a dedicated water infrastructure trust fund, and expanding financing mechanisms to invest in surface transportation, airports, public buildings, schools, housing, Superfund cleanup and more. At the same time, the T&I Committee should work to unlock the full potential of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, uncap the Passenger Facility Charge, and support the transition over the next 12 years to a more stable and equitable transportation funding system that charges for road use rather than gallons of fuel consumed.

The United States faces the same challenges as we have in the past, but we also face new challenges and opportunities with the climate crisis, new mobility options, and an uncertain funding future. Congress must develop a forward-thinking surface transportation bill that has real money behind it. I hope that this committee will endorse the continuation and expansion of the Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives program at the state level while also bringing road user charges to the federal level through an expanded national pilot program.

With urban centers booming, communities need the tools and resources necessary to make great places. Providing continued federal support for transportation options is critical to the continued success of urban areas which, as the *New York Times* recently highlighted¹, are also

¹ *New York Times*. April 23, 2019 “The Best Way to Rejuvenate Rural America? Invest in Cities” Liu and Arnosti.

key to the health of rural and small-town America. We can create safer streets by supporting the transfer of state-owned urban roads to local governments and advancing complete streets policies that lead to zero deaths for all road users. We can create more equitable outcomes by increasing assistance to all modes of transportation: restoring bicycle and pedestrian funding to a percentage of the Surface Transportation Block Grant program, increasing funding for transit capital investment grants, and meaningfully invest in the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. We must fix the destructive provisions in the GOP tax bill that damages commuter tax benefits that commuters, businesses, churches, and nonprofits have relied on for decades. Finally, I hope that the committee works to integrate new mobility options as solutions to our most vexing transportation problems. Communities should be able to support bikeshare and other mobility options to connect people in their first- or last-mile to mass transit; policymakers at all levels should have a better understanding the secondary influences of autonomous vehicles on transportation, municipal budgets, social equity, land use, urban design, and the environment.

This committee has a unique opportunity to be in the center of a meaningful, fully-funded infrastructure package and a forward-thinking surface transportation reauthorization this Congress. I look forward to being your partner on the Ways and Means Committee in providing the infrastructure investments communities need. And I look forward to working with this Committee to produce a once-in-a-generation reframing of federal transportation policy.