

MADELEINE DEAN
4TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

FINANCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE

WOMEN'S BIPARTISAN CAUCUS
VICE-CHAIR

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3804

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
129 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
202-225-4731

DISTRICT OFFICES:
115 EAST GLENSIDE AVENUE, SUITE 1
GLENSIDE, PA 19038
215-884-4300

101 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE A
NORRISTOWN, PA 19401
610-382-1250

Congresswoman Madeleine Dean

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day Hearing Testimony

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and the members of the Committee, for holding this member day hearing – allowing us to discuss the needs and priorities of our constituents.

As the Committee lays out its agenda for the 116th Congress and begins to craft a new, comprehensive transportation bill, I would like to highlight the needs and opportunities in my district, PA-04—which will benefit from strong investments in our infrastructure.

I hope that the members give special attention to the needs of our multi-modal transportation – our buses, passenger rail, bike lanes, trails, and more. Multi-modal transportation systems have several positive benefits, such as reducing congestion, preventing deaths, cutting travel times, benefitting our environment, and promoting economic activity. In the greater Philadelphia area, SEPTA – our regional transportation service – generates \$3.05 billion in Pennsylvania. Importantly, these systems and modes of travel also reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. As we look for substantive measures to curb climate change, increasing the amount and access to modes of public transportation must be part of this conversation.

Transit systems, in particular, have the ability to move large numbers of people in a fraction of the time, space, and carbon output as travelling individually in a car. Our goal in Congress must be to support and grow these systems, but it cannot be at the expense of equity and access. We must also ensure that city and regional buses and trains connect to all communities – rich and poor – allowing for increased mobility of their residents, as well as attracting the potential for economic development. SEPTA has a regional impact that supports 23,000 jobs and more than \$1.7 billion in earnings in communities across Southeastern Pennsylvania.

In 1981, the city of Pottstown in my district was a thriving manufacturing center and suburban hub. But that year its commuter rail line was suspended – which had detrimental effects on its community and economy. Many people who worked in Philadelphia left because they could not easily commute; the city lost a large portion of its tax base, and businesses left the city. Today, Pottstown has the highest poverty rate of any municipality in Pennsylvania's Fourth District.

Still, it is a city with hope. The residents, officials, and community leaders in Pottstown are diligently working to invest in its communities and revitalize their neighborhoods. Ensuring people have access to transit systems starts right here in Washington – by providing robust funding and creating grant programs to help communities rebound, build equitable infrastructure, and incentivize transit use. Today, there is a planned rail line to a commercial hub in my district – King of Prussia – that would connect to rail lines in under resourced communities like

Norristown and even sections of Philadelphia. These and many communities across America that have had similar paths as Pottstown are in dire need of investment – and those communities deserve a voice here in Washington.

We must also take the opportunity to invest in our trails and bike lanes. Not only are these modes of transportation zero emission, but they provide economic benefits as well. The Circuit – a large trail network project in the Greater Philadelphia region that receives federal funds – is directly benefitting local communities. This includes real estate value, millions of dollars in direct economic impact, and even a reduction in regional medical costs according to one 2011 study. One way to ensure these transportation routes are completely funded, is ensuring increased funding of the FAST Act Transportation Alternatives Set-Asides at 10% of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP). In Pennsylvania 84% of project applications are not funded equally \$367,130,228 unfunded project costs. Across the nation that cost rises to \$3.5 billion. These unfunded projects are detrimental communities who are hoping to create safe, environmentally friendly and economically prosperous bike and pedestrian systems.

Finally, and importantly, I hope the Committee considers the need for robust overhaul of our drinking water systems to ensure clean drinking water for every American. In particular, communities across the nation – including in my district – are suffering from PFAS contamination of the water supply—a chemical used in fire-fighting foam. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry these chemicals have been linked to a number of detrimental health effects including developmental effects in infants, issues with fertility, and an increase risk of cancer. What was once an unknown contaminant used on military bases across the country is now an urgent health risk.

I thank the Committee for recently holding a hearing on the Clean Water State Revolving fund and urge the members to consider the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund in your agenda going forward. State and local governments have been able to use the grants in the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to install technologies that clean PFAS contamination, or to provide alternative water to local residents.

Every American has the right to live a healthy life, and that requires our government to ensure every person has access to clean water.

Thank you again for your commitment to bettering our communities. I look forward to working with the members of the Committee as you continue your important work.

Madeleine Dean

Member of Congress