

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee about a number of different priorities that are important to me and my constituents.

As the Vice-Chairman of the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee, I believe it is vital that THUD and T&I work together to ensure that America's infrastructure is a driver of economic growth and meets the needs of all our citizens

And I think we'd all agree that we have a lot of work to do make get to that point.

First this morning, I'd like to speak about the Federal Bird Safe Buildings Act, which is before this committee.

In fact, I have introduced a version of this bill in every Congress I have been a member of

Because I believe that we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the world we live in.

Up to one billion birds die from colliding into buildings every year, which is a totally preventable problem.

The cost-negligible, bipartisan Bird Safe Buildings Act requires that public buildings constructed, acquired, or significantly altered by GSA incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features.

Bird-safe is an important bill for several reasons.

First birds have an intrinsic cultural, and ecological value. It is our responsibility to be good stewards of the environment and reduce the harmful impacts of our society on the natural world.

Additionally, birds help generate billions of dollars annually to the U.S. economy through wildlife watching activities.

One in five Americans, 48 million people, engage in bird watching.

And they spend about \$36 billion in pursuit of birding activities every year.

These activities support over 600,000 jobs and bring \$6.2 billion in state tax revenues.

For all these reasons, it's vital that we take the simple, straightforward, and low cost steps in my bill to protect birds from fatal collisions.

This bill has been referred to Chairwoman Titus' subcommittee and I thank her for her support of it in the past. I urge the committee to quickly consider and pass the Bird Safe Buildings Act so that it can be brought the floor for a vote in the full House.

Next, I'd like to talk about something that is an issue for every city in this country, and Chicago is no exception- funding for public transportation.

Effective public transit makes cities more livable and accessible for all inhabitants.

Transit oriented development can turn wasted or unused land into vibrant communities

and can allow existing communities to access economic and social opportunities that otherwise might be difficult for them to grasp.

For too long, public transit has been underserved by Congress and I will work with Chairman Price and my colleagues on appropriations to ensure that adequate funding is provided for transit systems this year,

But we are most effective in Congress when working together.

In all of its work this Congress, I urge this committee to consider public transit needs and, specifically,

To clarify for the Secretary of Transportation that key federal programs like TIFIA and RRIF should not be included as part of the federal share of a project as part of the Capital Investment Grant Program.

Chicagoland agencies like RTA are working hard to ensure that our infrastructure continues to meet the needs of our citizens

and shoring up the Highway Trust Fund and addressing the capital construction backlog are key to achieving that goal.

Finally, I want to touch on the issue of flooding, which is a serious concern in Chicago and communities around the country.

Today, I reintroduced the Flood Mapping Modernization and Homeowner Empowerment Pilot Program Act, which will create a 12 city pilot program

and give communities the resources they need to address urban flooding within their local contexts,

while also helping FEMA glean new best practices to help improve flood mapping and mitigation nationwide.

I encourage the committee to take up and to pass that bill, but there's also room for additional pre-disaster work to address flooding.

A pre-disaster infrastructure program as part of the FHWA is one possible approach to safeguard the nation's vital transportation systems like federal-aid roads, highways, and bridges from increasing natural disasters

and to improve the long term resilience of the system.

I believe the committee should look into such a concept as a possible model for the future.

Chairman Defazio, members of the Committee, thank you for your time today. I look forward to working with the committee going forward and thank you for your good work for the infrastructure of our country.