

Representative Robert J. Wittman, VA-01

Intro:

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

I represent the First District of Virginia, which is home to some of the most unique transportation challenges in the country. The First District spans the I-95 Corridor in Northern Virginia, which includes the worst traffic hot spot in the nation, all the way down to the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, which includes some of the most neglected rural roads and bridges in the State of Virginia. The National Capital Region is also home to one of the most strained public transit networks in the country, which includes the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), METRO, Amtrak, Ronald Reagan International (DCA) and Dulles International Airports (IAD). Also, right outside of my district is the Port of Virginia, which services all 48 contiguous states and faces an urgent need for expansion.

I would like to take this time to highlight transportation and infrastructure issues important to my district and Virginia.

Addressing the congestion issue along the I-95 corridor is essential. I believe Congress can and should do more to provide adequate resources to leverage the state's investments to address the issues on I-95. Congress must prioritize public-private partnerships and innovative modern-day technologies.

An important component to reducing traffic congestion in Northern Virginia is commuter rail. Long Bridge, which spans the Potomac River between Virginia and DC, is a critical gateway between southeast and northeast rail networks. Constituents in my district rely on the services of Amtrak and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) to commute throughout D.C. and Northern Virginia.

The current Long Bridge structure is the primary constraint limiting VRE's ability to operate more passenger trains that could significantly reduce traffic in Northern Virginia. Healthy investments in federal formula programs will support VRE's ongoing and future investments to expand their service.

My constituents as well as Members of Congress rely on the services provided by Ronald Reagan International (DCA) and Dulles International Airport (IAD). The region and nation benefit from the successes of DCA and IAD. Congress should support sustainable funding mechanisms that allow these airports to make critical investments in safety, security and efficiency. Also, maintaining the current slot/perimeter allotment at DCA is important to the stability of the region.

The Port of Virginia, located right outside of my district, is one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard. It manages cargo that is shipped to all 48 contiguous states. Increased shipping traffic and larger vessels are straining the Port's current capacity. At its

current depth and width, the Port is experiencing an urgent need to deepen and expand its channels.

I want to thank the committee for its work on WRDA 2018, which fully authorized the port to deepen the Norfolk Harbor to 55 feet and widen the Thimble Shoals Channel to 1400 feet. Continued federal resources are needed to support the over \$350 million invested by the state of Virginia for navigation improvements already underway at the Port.

Lastly, expanding access to high-speed internet is critical to economic development and growth in our nation. As Co-Chair of the House Rural Broadband Caucus I have made expanding broadband access in rural areas a top priority. Currently, burdensome regulations are hindering shovel-ready projects from providing broadband access to unserved populations throughout the country. By streamlining our federal permitting processes, the committee can help better connect the more than 23 million Americans with little or no access to broadband, to the digital economy.

I want to thank Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the committee for this opportunity to testify today. As you can see, my district faces unique and substantial infrastructure challenges. I look forward to working with you to help solve these issues, continue to grow our economy, and promote jobs.