



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chair

Katherine W. Dedrick
Staff Director

Sam Graves
Ranking Member

Paul J. Sass
Republican Staff Director

March 22, 2021

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
FROM: Staff, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
RE: Full Committee Hearing on “The Administration’s Priorities for Transportation Infrastructure”

PURPOSE

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will meet on Thursday, March 25, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. EDT in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Cisco Webex to hold a hearing titled “The Administration’s Priorities for Transportation Infrastructure.” The hearing will provide an opportunity for Members of the Committee to probe the Administration’s priorities for infrastructure investment, transportation policy, surface transportation authorization, and other matters. The Committee will hear testimony from the United States Department of Transportation (DOT).

BACKGROUND

United States Department of Transportation

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure authorizes programs carried out by the following DOT modal administrations and offices:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Maritime Administration (MARAD)

- Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
- Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)
- Office of the Secretary (OST)

On December 15, 2020, President Biden nominated Pete Buttigieg to be Secretary of Transportation. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a confirmation hearing on the nomination on January 21, 2021. The Senate confirmed Secretary Buttigieg on February 2, 2021, by a vote of 86-13.

Infrastructure Investment Needs

America’s infrastructure network is essential for quality of life, for supporting the economy, and for creating family-supporting jobs. In order to retain the benefits of our transportation infrastructure network, investment must keep up with needs. The current costs of our infrastructure needs are staggering. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the country’s total infrastructure needs over the next 10 years total nearly \$6 trillion, and the funding gap to meet those needs is \$2.59 trillion.¹ ASCE graded the nation’s infrastructure as a “C-.”²

In the coming decades, the nation’s infrastructure will continue to face significant strain. America’s population is expected to grow to more than 400 million by 2060.³ Freight movements are expected to increase 40 percent by 2045.⁴ At the same time, much of our infrastructure needs to be modernized and upgraded to meet current and future needs; to account for the needs of all impacted communities; to take advantage of new technologies and innovative mobility solutions to move people and goods more safely, efficiently, and equitably; to reduce carbon pollution; and to build stronger, more resilient, and adaptive transportation networks.

Surface Transportation Authorization

The authorization for highway, transit, rail, and safety programs expires on September 30, 2021. The Committee is working to enact a multi-year surface authorization bill in advance of this deadline.

Last Congress, on July 1, 2020, the House of Representatives passed, by a vote of 233-188, H.R. 2, the *Moving Forward Act*, which would reauthorize surface transportation programs through September 30, 2025. The Senate did not take up H.R. 2.

Since 1995, multi-year surface transportation authorization bills enacted by Congress include: the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) (P.L. 105-178) enacted in 1998, the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) (P.L. 109-59) enacted in 2005, the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act* (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141) enacted in 2012, and the *Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act* (FAST Act) (P.L. 114-94), enacted

¹ American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), “Infrastructure Report Card,” 2021. <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/>. Accessed March 16, 2021.

² *Id.*

³ U.S. Census Bureau, “Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060,” February 2020.

⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, “DOT Releases 30-Year Freight Projections,” 2016.

in 2015. On October 1, 2020, the *Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act* (P.L. 116-159) was enacted, which included a one-year extension of the *FAST Act*.

Aviation Programs

While current FAA and DOT aviation programs are not set to expire until October 1, 2023, Secretary Buttigieg will need to monitor the implementation of significant aviation legislation enacted in recent years, ensuring legislative mandates are implemented expeditiously and in accordance with Congressional intent.

First, on October 5, 2018, President Trump signed into law the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* (P.L. 115-254), a five-year reauthorization of FAA and DOT aviation programs. The *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* contains more than 400 mandates for the FAA and the DOT to issue regulations, prepare reports to Congress, and conduct studies in the fields of aviation safety, airport infrastructure, agency management, and aviation consumer protections. The FAA has yet to fully implement several key provisions included in the 2018 law, including mandates that the FAA: require flight attendants receive a minimum of 10 hours' rest between flight duty periods; require the installation of a secondary cockpit barrier on each new aircraft that is manufactured for delivery to a passenger air carrier; complete a call to action on airline engine safety and report to Congress on the results; and disburse aviation workforce program grants to develop the next generation of U.S. aviation workers.

Second, on December 27, 2020, following the conclusion of multiple reviews and investigations into the FAA's certification of the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, which crashed twice in five months, killing 346 people, Congress enacted comprehensive aviation certification legislation—the *Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act*—as part of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021* (Div. V, P.L. 116-260). The Act reforms and strengthens the FAA's aircraft certification process; ensures transparency, accountability, and integrity in FAA regulation of U.S. aircraft manufacturers; addresses issues identified in various reviews and investigations related to human factors, automation in the cockpit, and international pilot training; and authorizes nearly \$275 million over five years in robust FAA oversight and aviation safety-improving programs and initiatives. The FAA is in the very early stages of implementing this critical aviation safety law.

WITNESS LIST

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation