

# Opening Statement of Investigations and Oversight Ranking Member Ralph Norman at Hearing on Transportation and Infrastructure Resilience

May 21, 2019

## Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairwoman Sherrill, for convening this important hearing, and thank you to the witnesses for your testimony this morning.

We are here today to examine how natural disasters and extreme weather events pose risks to transportation infrastructure and to assess the research and development targeted at improving the resilience of America's transportation infrastructure.

Reliable and strong infrastructure is critically important to my home state of South Carolina. In the past five years alone, South Carolina has been impacted by a thousand-year flood and back-to-back hurricanes. In South Carolina we're also concerned about the impact that increased flooding frequency will have on our communities.

To address our state's specific concerns, the Governor created the South Carolina Floodwater Commission. This commission is tasked with identifying short-term and long-term solutions to mitigate the impact of extreme weather, with one task force specifically focused on infrastructure resilience.

I welcome the chance to consider the issue of infrastructure resilience and highlight the role the Federal government can play in ensuring that state and local communities have all the resources necessary to make the best decision for their infrastructure planning.

Further, I'm looking forward to learning more about technologies and innovations that can improve the resilience of America's Transportation infrastructure systems and assets—from advanced composite materials to additive manufacturing with cement and concrete.

We will also hear about some of the ambitious initiatives being undertaken at Federal, state, and local levels of government to incorporate resilience

considerations into the planning, design, and construction of America's transportation infrastructure, both now and in the future.

In recent years, much of this country's transportation infrastructure has started to show its age. Across the country—from coastal communities to landlocked states—roads are in disrepair, bridges are collapsing, and tunnels are crumbling.

Fortunately, great work is being done at the Federal, state, and local levels of government, within industry, and among academia to improve transportation infrastructure resilience.

Composite materials—like those manufactured by Composite Advantage and other members of the American Composites Manufacturing Association—are already being used to rebuild and repair crumbling infrastructure and corroding assets. This is a great example of American innovation rising to meet the challenges facing our nation.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is also working hard to help improve the resilience of American communities. From research into advanced materials and enhancing traditional materials, like concrete and cement, to the development of tools, standards, and guidelines, NIST has been working diligently to improve the way transportation infrastructure decisions are made, once again putting its extreme brain power to work for the American people.

State agencies like the Texas A&M Transportation Institute are making positive strides to improve transportation infrastructure resilience. And municipal authorities like the New York City Mayor's office are also involved in this important work.

It is encouraging to see representatives from each of these organizations here today, as the work they are doing will undoubtedly benefit officials throughout the country as they plan and prepare to build resilience considerations into their transportation infrastructure decisions.

I look forward to a productive and insightful discussion with our distinguished witnesses about the risks that extreme weather events and natural disasters pose to America's transportation infrastructure, research and activities aimed at operationalizing and incorporating resilience considerations into the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure systems and assets, and innovating and exciting ways that we can improve the resilience of America's transportation infrastructure, both now and in the future.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.