

## Statement of Senator Jon Kyl

Before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Concerning: Nomination of Victor M. Mendez to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration

June 2, 2009

Good morning. Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Victor Mendez, President Obama's nominee to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Victor will bring a wealth of experience to the FHWA, primarily from his years of experience at the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). He joined ADOT in 1985 as a civil engineer and quickly worked his way through the ranks. By 2001, Victor was appointed by then-Governor Janet Napolitano as Director of ADOT and served in that capacity until February of this year. As Director, Victor led an organization of over 4,600 employees with an annual operating budget of approximately \$430 million. The five year capital budget, consisting primarily of highway projects, was approximately \$6 billion in state and federal funds.

The transportation issues that Arizona faced during Victor's tenure – population growth, outdated infrastructure, and funding obstacles – prepare him well for his role as the Administrator of FHWA. Instead of maintaining the status quo, Victor had the vision to implement many new financing, technological, and research methodologies that were used to meet many of Arizona's transportation challenges. For instance, Victor successfully accelerated the construction schedule for the Valley Regional Freeway System in the Phoenix area, advancing the project's completion from 2014 to 2007. He also led the Arizona management of the construction of the Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge with Nevada and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge is a \$241 million project that has transportation, security, and trade implications. With Victor's leadership, the project is on budget and is expected to be completed next year. I have no doubt that Victor will continue to utilize innovative methods to ensure that our nation's transportation infrastructure needs are met.

To round out his transportation experience, Victor also served as President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and co-chaired the Transportation, Infrastructure and Ports Committee of the Arizona Mexico Commission. In 2008, Victor was selected as Leader of the Year in Public Policy Transportation by the *Arizona Capitol Times*.

I commend President Obama for choosing such a fine candidate and congratulate Victor on his nomination and look forward to working with him.