

Testimony of Joseph A. Czyzyk
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Joint Hearing of:
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
February 23, 2011
Greater Los Angeles Veterans Administration

**IMPROVING AND REFORMING OUR NATION'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT
JOB CREATION AND THE ECONOMY**

Chairman Boxer and Chairman Mica and distinguished Members of the House and Senate, my name is Joe Czyzyk and I am the Chairman of the Board of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the largest business organization in Southern California. It is a privilege for me to appear before you this morning. First, allow me to thank you for bringing this important hearing here to Los Angeles. Welcome to our great City.

Second, a quick word of our history...it was the LA Area Chamber of Commerce, back in 1890, that presented a resolution to Congress and hosted interested members of the House and Senate for a tour of what we envisioned would become the Port of Los Angeles.

Today, our Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are the largest in the Nation and are the backbone of trade with Asia. Our Ports are a result of collaboration between business and our federal government.

This morning, you will hear about ways to kick start vitally needed infrastructure projects here in Los Angeles County and across the Nation. Together, we can once again become collaborators in improving our Nation's dated infrastructure.

You know this without me saying it—better transportation drives jobs. Getting goods to market faster and people to work more efficiently is critical to our Nation's economic recovery.

Here in Los Angeles, we are committed to reducing congestion, repairing and modernizing our infrastructure and improving our environment and quality of life. With Measure R in 2008, which the Chamber fully supported and worked to help pass, the region committed to investing in our transportation system.

In our City's history, business has collaborated with our local elected officials, the environmental community and labor, a coalition that again sits in front of you today united in support for a program to accelerate the development of those Measure R projects.

Our County's voters did their part by taxing ourselves, now Washington must do its part. Innovative financing tools from the federal government will help stretch tax dollars further without any major impact to the federal budget.

One way you can help is to fully fund the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA).

By enhancing and expanding the current TIFIA program, the federal government will meet the positive demand to finance transportation projects and create much needed new jobs. A flexible TIFIA program is needed that can move forward individual projects or a unified collection of projects.

Specifically, the LA Area Chamber of Commerce recommends an increase to the TIFIA funding cap to reflect current demand. Existing funding is insufficient, the program is severely oversubscribed and eligible, high-quality and credit-worthy projects are being turned away. Increasing the funding cap will help projects from California to Florida. This will help accelerate transit construction. And this will put people to work.

In conclusion, the Chamber will be in Washington DC the first week of May for our annual Access DC trip. We have partnered with the Mayor's office, MTA, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and other business groups to continue advocating for critical infrastructure investment during our visit.

Please remember, we've collaborated successfully before. We need to collaborate again. Thank you for coming here. I appreciate the opportunity to testify.

I hope you enjoy your time in our City of Angels.

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