

STATEMENT OF  
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BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
U.S. SENATE

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Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Boxer, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today as you consider my nomination for Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). I am sincerely honored to have been nominated for this position by President Obama with the support of Secretary Foxx. I appreciate the important role this Committee plays in establishing transportation policy. Should you choose to confirm me, I look forward to working closely with each of you to continue to improve the safety and mobility of our Nation's highways and the delivery of the Federal-aid highway program.

Serving as the FHWA Deputy Administrator since 2009 and carrying out all the duties of the Administrator since December of 2013, I am well aware of the many challenges and responsibilities facing the next Federal Highway Administrator. We are confronting the expiration of the extension of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act, or MAP-21, later this month. We need to identify a long-term, sustainable funding mechanism to ensure we have the resources to address our aging infrastructure, as well as provide State and local project sponsors the certainty needed to plan effectively and make sound investments. We must ensure that our currently outdated highway infrastructure is modernized to move people and goods safely and efficiently. And, we must help provide State and local project sponsors the tools they need to deliver the best value for every taxpayer dollar.

If confirmed, I will draw upon my six years of Federal service with FHWA and 27 years of experience in State government, including 15 years serving as a leader in State transportation policy, to focus on several priority areas: improving safety; ensuring long-term reauthorization and predictable funding; maximizing transportation investments; and continuing to build an innovation network with State and local partners, including the private and non-profit sectors.

Improving Safety

Of all these priorities, none is more important than safety. While recent statistics show that fatalities and serious injuries on our roads are declining, the numbers are still unacceptably high—the preliminary number for 2014 is that 32,675 people died on U.S. roadways. If I am confirmed as the Federal Highway Administrator, I will work to continue this downward trend in highway fatalities and injuries. FHWA will leverage partnerships with States to make advancements in highway safety, building on the data-driven, strategic approach of the Highway Safety

Improvement Program that focuses on improving safety performance for all road users, including bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The FHWA also will maintain its emphasis on increased deployment of safety countermeasures. For example, roadway departures account for over half of all fatal crashes. To mitigate vertical drop-offs, FHWA advocates installing the Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> on pavements during paving or resurfacing projects. Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> has been a focus of FHWA's Every Day Counts partnership with the States, or EDC, since the first round of EDC (EDC-1) innovations was identified in 2010. By including the Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> during paving work, this countermeasure can be implemented system-wide at a very low cost. It is a simple and extremely effective solution that can help save lives by allowing drivers who drift off highways to return to the road safely. As a strategy to overcome implementation barriers, FHWA made a Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> paver attachment available to every State that wanted to try the technology. By the end of EDC-1, 52 State DOTs had used the Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> on at least one project, incorporating the technique into nearly 1,200 projects. Forty State DOTs have now adopted the use of Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> as standard practice on paving projects where applicable.

Traffic incidents, including crashes, disabled vehicles, and debris on roadways create unsafe driving conditions, put motorists and first responder lives at risk, and account for approximately 25 percent of all traffic delays. Under the second round of EDC (EDC-2), FHWA and the States leveraged EDC to more rapidly deploy a product of the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2). This product is a national, multi-disciplinary traffic incident management (TIM) process and training program for first responders. The TIM training focuses on response strategies that protect motorists and responders while minimizing the impact on traffic flow. Governors, transportation leaders, and incident response agencies across the country can save lives, time, and money by promoting the full-scale deployment of the innovative TIM training program. As of the end of June 2015, the TIM training is being deployed by over 6,500 instructors across the Nation, and over 117,000 personnel have attended TIM training to date. In October 2014, FHWA also launched a web-based TIM responder training program hosted at FHWA's National Highway Institute, and over 600 people have completed the web-based training to date.

High-friction surface treatments (HFSTs) are pavement overlay systems with exceptional skid resistance not typically provided by conventional materials. These treatments involve applying high-quality, durable aggregates with a binder to the road surface to provide long-lasting skid resistance at high-crash locations, such as horizontal curves, intersection approaches, and downgrades. High-friction surface treatments help motorists maintain better control in both wet and dry driving conditions, reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities. They are relatively low-cost, can be applied manually or by machine, and can be applied quickly with minimal impacts on traffic. High-friction surface treatments also are customizable, enabling agencies to use them where they are most needed. These treatments generated widespread interest during EDC-2, and by the end of the two-year cycle, the number of States using HFSTs had grown from 14 to 39. Five States have made the use of HFSTs a standard practice for reducing crashes at critical locations.

### Ensuring Long-Term Reauthorization and Predictable Funding

The impending expiration of the extension of MAP-21 provides an opportunity for us collectively to focus on the Federal-aid highway program of the future. If confirmed, I am committed to

leading FHWA into the next authorization period and working together with Congress to ensure predictable, stable, and adequate funding.

President Obama has laid out his vision for a six-year surface transportation authorization to spur further economic growth and give States the certainty needed to make sound, long-term investments that will create jobs—the Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America Act, or GROW AMERICA. I believe GROW AMERICA makes an important contribution to the reauthorization and funding discussions taking place in Congress today. With the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act (DRIVE Act), this Committee is leading the charge in Congress to take action on a long-term authorization. I am hopeful that this Committee's work on highway authorization is just the beginning of actions Congress will take over the coming weeks to address the Nation's critical transportation issues and to meet the needs of our aging infrastructure.

This Committee knows well the costs of inadequate infrastructure investment. Americans spend an estimated 5.5 billion hours in traffic each year, costing families more than \$120 billion in extra fuel and lost time. American businesses pay an estimated \$27 billion a year in extra freight transportation costs, increasing shipping delays and raising prices on everyday products. Additionally, 65 percent of our Nation's roads and 25 percent of bridges require significant repair or cannot handle current traffic demands. At the present rate of funding, it will take another 26 years before the approximately 61,000 bridges currently classified as structurally deficient are repaired or replaced. For a Nation that is expected to have 70 million more citizens by 2050 and a significant increase in the volume of freight traveling on our highways, railroads, ports, and aviation systems, the current level of investment we are putting into our transportation system is inadequate to address these urgent needs. Underinvestment also impacts safety. Highway traffic fatalities occur disproportionately in rural America, in part because of inadequate road conditions.

The lack of a long-term surface transportation reauthorization act also creates uncertainty for State and local project sponsors and impedes their ability to plan effectively. Increasingly, we are seeing State and local officials abandon planning for the more ambitious and expensive projects that will move our national and regional economies forward. Instead, these officials are targeting available dollars on smaller preventative maintenance and repaving projects that, while important, do not address the longer term needs for additional investment in transportation infrastructure capacity and quality.

If confirmed, I look forward to supporting Secretary Foxx's efforts to work with this Committee on a long-term authorization to ensure that our transportation infrastructure receives bold investment to address the needs of today and the future.

### Maximizing Transportation Investments

Achieving ample and consistent funding is only part of the solution to our transportation challenges. We must continue our collective efforts to modernize how we deliver projects and maximize transportation investments through technology and process innovations. We have made tremendous strides in that direction during my time at FHWA through our EDC partnership with States, local governments, and the private sector. Launched in 2009 by then-FHWA Administrator

Victor Mendez, now the Department's Deputy Secretary, I was privileged to be his point-person in moving this initiative forward. Of all FHWA's accomplishments during my tenure, I am most proud of my leadership in helping the Agency implement EDC and its fundamental goals of better, faster, and smarter project delivery. And, if confirmed, I look forward to taking EDC to the next level in partnership with States and locals to deliver the highway program of the future.

Considering the budget constraints that governments at all levels are facing, it is critically important that we deliver the best value for every taxpayer dollar. EDC is having a measureable impact on shortening project delivery and encouraging the use of new technologies. The result is States and local agencies saving time and money that can be directed to additional projects. With this Committee's leadership, Congress incorporated into MAP-21 process innovations advanced in EDC such as Programmatic Agreements and innovative contracting strategies such as Construction Manager/General Contractor. The use of alternative technical concepts allows a project owner to evaluate new ideas, receive constructability advice from the contractors, and consider approaches that have the potential to reduce time, cost, and overall risk in the construction of projects.

In addition to process innovations, technology innovations like Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub> and HFSTs are improving safety. Other innovations are helping to deliver transportation projects faster and cheaper. Using Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC), transportation agencies have been able to replace bridges over a weekend (within 48 to 72 hours), reducing overall project construction time by months to years in some cases. Since October 2010, transportation agencies have designed or constructed more than 2,500 replacement bridges using one or more accelerated bridge construction technologies. Forty-one States have a specification and/or contractual language that allow Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA). From 2009 to 2013, WMA is estimated to have saved over \$600 million in fuel used during production – savings which the contractors can pass on to State DOTs and local public agencies. The use of warm-mix asphalt will save an estimated \$3 billion by the year 2020.

At FHWA, we also are looking forward to seeing the gains that the performance-based policy framework in MAP-21 will start to create in terms of helping maximize investments. By focusing on national goals, increasing accountability, and improving transparency, these changes will improve decision-making in States and MPOs through more informed planning and programming. If I am confirmed as the Federal Highway Administrator, implementation of performance management and assisting States as they transition toward this framework will remain a priority at FHWA. Performance management is a key tool in preparation for the Federal-aid highway program of the future.

#### Continuing to Build an Innovation Network

As a young member of the Maine House of Representatives and then serving as a senior adviser to Governor (now Senator) Angus King, I learned a lot of lessons at the State level about the importance of connecting with stakeholders and building partnerships. This focus on partnership remains a priority for me in my current position at FHWA. I have witnessed firsthand that the success of major transportation projects largely hinges on effective partnerships among Federal, State, and local governments, as well as private sector partners such as consultants and contractors. This approach also has proven vital to the success of EDC, which relies on effective public and private stakeholder cooperation throughout the highway transportation community.

Across the Nation, transportation stakeholders want to look beyond "business as usual" and become more innovative in the way they deliver projects, so that projects are completed faster and the public can realize the benefits sooner. If confirmed, I will encourage and cultivate partnerships with State and local entities to continue to build an "innovation network" throughout the country with the goal of mainstreaming proven technology and process innovations.

Through the EDC model, FHWA works with stakeholders to identify a new collection of market-ready innovations to champion every two years. After the process of selecting EDC innovations for deployment is completed, transportation leaders from across the country gather at regional summits. These summits provide transportation professionals the opportunity to learn about and assess the innovations being promoted through EDC, exchange ideas with their agency and industry counterparts in neighboring States, and provide feedback to FHWA on the support and resources needed to adopt the innovations in their own States. These summits also begin the process for States and locals to focus on the innovations that make the most sense for their unique program needs, establish performance goals, and commit to finding opportunities to get those innovations into practice over the next two years.

Forty-six States have created State Transportation Innovation Councils (STICs), which are often responsible for the evaluation of innovations and oversight of deployment efforts. Co-chaired by a State DOT leader and FHWA Division Administrator in each State, the STICs can encourage innovation and cooperation among a wide range of partners at the State and local levels and allow each State to customize EDC implementation to its own needs and challenges. The STICs have become an essential component in helping create a national network to deploy innovation and get the most value out of every Federal, State, and local transportation dollar.

During the first two rounds of EDC, we collaborated with transportation stakeholders in every State to deploy two dozen proven innovations that are making a difference. FHWA held a series of regional summits last fall to introduce a third round of EDC (EDC-3) with 11 innovations. Each State has now selected EDC-3 innovations and begun deployment efforts. Through EDC, we are saving money, saving time, and saving lives—exactly the results we believed were possible if we and our State partners made innovation a standard industry practice.

## **CONCLUSION**

Recognizing the many demands on your time, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity you have afforded me to testify today as you consider my nomination for FHWA Administrator. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.

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