

Table of Contents

U.S. Senate	Date: Tuesday, January 29, 2019
Committee on Environment and Public Works	Washington, D.C.
STATEMENT OF:	PAGE:
THE HONORABLE JOHN BARRASSO, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING	3
THE HONORABLE THOMAS CARPER, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE	6
THE HONORABLE NORMAN MINETA, FORMER SECRETARY, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	14
NICOLE R. NASON, NOMINATED TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	20

HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF NICOLE R. NASON TO BE ADMINISTRATOR
OF THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2019

U.S. SENATE

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Building, the Honorable John Barrasso [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso, Capito, Braun, Rounds, Sullivan, Boozman, Ernst, Carper, Cardin, Whitehouse, Gillibrand, Booker, and Markey.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN BARRASSO, A UNITED STATES
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING

Senator Barrasso. I call this hearing to order.

Today, we will consider the nomination of Nicole R. Nason to be the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Ms. Nason is well-qualified for this important post. She brings impressive, meaningful experience in federal transportation policy to this critically important position. I applaud President Trump's nomination of such an accomplished and dedicated public servant.

The Federal Highway Administration plays a central role in American mobility. The Administration is the lead federal partner to State and local transportation programs that maintain and improve our Nation's roads, highways, and bridges.

America's transportation infrastructure faces a lot of challenges. For far too long, the Federal Highway Administration has been without Senate-confirmed leadership. Moreover, the authorization of federal highway programs will expire in September of next year.

The Congressional Budget Office projects the Highway Trust Fund will become insolvent sometime in 2021. That is why we must work together in this committee to write and pass a bipartisan highway bill that upgrades America's roads and

bridges in a fiscally responsible manner, and do it in this Congress.

We successfully worked together to pass comprehensive, bipartisan water infrastructure legislation. Now let us come together to fix our highways, roads, and bridges. This legislation must address the needs of rural America, and well as urban America.

Rural roads are vital to bringing raw materials and products from the heartland to urban centers. Federal highways like I-80 run coast to coast, bringing goods and services across America. This includes the stretch of I-80 in my home State of Wyoming.

We must maintain and improve these highways in rural States to keep these vital arteries of commerce open. In addition, I strongly support the federal highway program's current reliance on distributing funds by formula to the States. This is the best way to ensure that funding is transformed into projects quickly.

The Federal Highway Administration will need a strong Administrator to work with Congress on the deployment, development, and implementation of highway infrastructure legislation. Nicole Nason is the right person for the job.

During the Bush Administration, Ms. Nason served as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration, the Department of Transportation's top road safety official. Prior to this role, she served as the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration Administrator.

On behalf of MADD, I wholeheartedly endorse her for this position.

The Associated General Contractors of America said that she is a "superb choice to fulfill FHWA's leadership role in improving mobility on our Nation's highways." As such, the Associated General Contractors of America urges the Senate to quickly confirm her nomination.

The Governors Highway Safety Association said: "Throughout her career, Ms. Nason has demonstrated a clear commitment to public service and, during her tenure as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a dedication to advancing highway safety."

Confirming her to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration will be an important step in supporting our Nation's highways, roads, and bridges. I urge my colleagues to work with me to get this done.

I would now like to turn to the Ranking Member for his statement. Senator Carper.

[The prepared statement of Senator Barrasso follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS CARPER, A UNITED STATES
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Senator Carper. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is my intent to place a hold on the nomination of Ms.
Nason. Not really.

Who are those old people sitting next to you? Are those
your kids? Tell us your names.

Senator Carper. First on the right.

Ms. Abby Nason. I am Abby.

Senator Carper. Hi, Abby.

Ms. Alex Nason. I am Alex.

Mr. Brady Nason. I am Brady.

Senator Carper. Who is the big guy?

Mr. David Nason. I am David.

Senator Carper. I want to thank you guys for your
willingness to share this woman with the rest of us. The battle
ahead for her confirmation will be hard fought. I have a hunch
she will kind of squeak through. We will see. It depends on
how she does today.

Ms. Nason, we want to thank you.

It is great to see Norman. Many of us were pleased to
previously serve with Norm in the House of Representatives years
ago and as Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of
Transportation and God knows what else. He is warmly loved in

Delaware and on the Delmarva by the horseshoe crab population of our region. There was a sanctuary created and he helped it grow and did that to save the horseshoe crabs which have been around hundreds of millions of years it turns out.

Ms. Nason, thank you for appearing before our committee this morning. We welcome you and your family here today. We welcome your nomination to lead the Federal Highway Administration.

As my colleagues will recall, you are not the first person nominated by this Administration for this job. A fellow from Iowa DOT, the Director of Transportation, Director Paul Trambino, withdrew his name as a nominee because of the illness of his father. He wanted to spend the last weeks and months with his dad. He passed on this job in order to be able to do that. His family's misfortune opened this opportunity for you.

It is interesting that when I was talking with you yesterday, you spoke about your own father and the impact his life, his misfortune with a terrible motorcycle accident, which sort of helped guide you in the end to safety advancements and now brings you before us today.

It has now been more than two years since there has been an Administrator, the longest gap in leadership for the agency in more than 100 years, which was long before our Nation's Interstate Highway System even came into existence, back when

the Federal Highway Administration was known as the Bureau of Public Roads.

I have long said that leadership is the key to the success of any organization. We have heard many times over the last two years that the Trump Administration is eager to enact major infrastructure legislation and make significant investments in rebuilding our Country's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems.

With that in mind, in my view, it is counterintuitive to have left vacant for such a long period of time such an important leadership role in the Federal Highway Administration, an agency with a critical infrastructure mission.

I hope that the President's nomination of you, Ms. Nason, to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration is both evidence that the Trump Administration is aware of these organizational needs, and also a signal that the Administration is ready to work with Congress on reauthorizing our Nation's transportation programs.

The Federal Highway Administration is the lead federal agency that oversees more than 220,000 miles of our national highway system and some 145,000 bridges. Today, far too many of those roadways and bridges have been in use well beyond their original design and as we know, are in poor condition.

Too many drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists put their

lives at risk when they use our roadways. In 2017, two years ago, there were more than 37,000 fatalities on our Nation's roadways. For context, that is approximately the same number as the number of lives lost annually in our Country to gun violence.

Too many Americans also lack access to reliable transit or safe places to walk or bike, or to charging stations for an electric vehicles or fueling stations for hydrogen. That means the many people in our Country who would like to reduce their carbon footprint may not have many real options to do so.

Next year, the FAST Act, which provided five years of funding and policy certainty for our transportation sector, is set to expire. Congress must work now on reauthorizing our federal surface transportation programs so that we can provide continued certainty for States, tribal communities and cities, while also addressing the opportunities and challenges facing our transportation sector today and in the years to come.

We have a rapidly evolving transportation industry in which new tools, data and technology are disrupting traditional practices of planning, building, operating and using road infrastructure.

As we know, our climate is changing. Our vehicles and travel patterns accelerate and exacerbate that change, while at the same time, increasingly extreme weather events and sea level

rise wear down our transportation networks.

In addition to these major policy concerns, we face another big problem. Our Highway Trust Fund is going broke. Last year, we spent almost \$13 billion more from the Highway Trust Fund than we collected in revenues.

I will say that again. Last year, we spent almost \$13 billion more from the Highway Trust Fund than we collected in revenues. Next year, that deficit will be even greater.

To pay for the FAST Act for surface transportation, we took \$70 billion from the General Fund and other programs at a time when our federal budget deficit last year reached \$750 billion. I believe we are on target to reach a federal deficit for this year of \$850 billion and may be next year as much as \$1 trillion.

For the next five-year transportation bill, we will need to find an additional \$85 billion just to keep our programs at the current funding level. Despite spending more than we collect, we still are not even spending enough. The backlog of money needed to rehabilitate and improve highways and bridges has grown to \$800 billion. Think about that, an \$800 billion backlog.

While we are thinking about that, let me conclude by saying that I hope Ms. Nason will prove to be a true partner to those of us here in Congress, one who will work with us from day one

to address these and other challenges I just mentioned and other challenges in the months and years ahead.

These challenges are great, but so are the opportunities. I am hopeful that Ms. Nason will prove to be the leader who is needed right now to find opportunity in adversity so that we can seize the day.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much, Senator Carper.

We now have a special privilege in this committee to hear from one of the greats in American politics and history. Norm Mineta is here, the former Secretary of Transportation, with 20 years in the House, Chairman of the Transportation Committee in the House, then Secretary of Commerce for Bill Clinton, and Secretary of Transportation for G.W. Bush.

However, if you Google him, you get Norman Mineta and it says "and Al Simpson." There is no way to avoid this linkage that began over seven decades ago as Boy Scouts in Cody, Wyoming written about recently in the Washington Post and CBS News did a wonderful story about you, your legacy and the friendship and our kinship with Wyoming.

We are so privileged to have you joining us today.

With this, I would like to ask you, Mr. Secretary, to please proceed.

Senator Boozman. Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Senator Boozman.

Senator Boozman. Could I also just voice the fact that I am so pleased to see you today and thank you for your service?

You were so helpful to me when I was in the House when you were Secretary of Transportation, even before that. You gave me great advice. I think you truly are a model for what this place should be all about, working with both sides, trying to get

results.

The Secretary and one of my mentors, General Paul Hammerschmidt, were great friends. Again, thank you for your service. Thank you for helping so many of us in so many different ways. We appreciate you.

Senator Barrasso. Mr. Secretary.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE NORMAN MINETA, FORMER SECRETARY,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Mineta. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the honor of appearing before you this morning and permitting me to address you.

It is a pleasure to see so many Senators and former colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure to work over the years.

Thank you for this honor and privilege to speak on behalf of Nicole R. Nason, the nominee to be Federal Highway Administrator.

I have known Nicole since 2003 when she came to the Department of Transportation to serve as our Assistant Secretary of Government Affairs. As Secretary of Transportation, I met with Nicole nearly every day to discuss legislative proposals and strategies.

However, her counsel went far beyond legislative issues. She was a key member of my executive team and was one of the department's liaison's with the White House and the Office of Management and Budget.

After three years as the Assistant Secretary, I recommended to President George W. Bush that she be nominated as DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator. She was unanimously confirmed by the Senate and served until 2008 as

NHTSA Administrator.

She successfully implemented numerous safety mandates and reporting requirements by SAFETEA-LU. During Nicole's tenure as NHTSA's Administrator, significant rulemakings were completed, including electronic stability control, side impact priorities protection and improvement in roof restraint, all because of her leadership skills.

She also instituted a series of public meetings addressing topics such as the New Car Assessment Program, school bus safety, child safety seats, and use of ignition interlock devices. Many of these proposals originated from these meetings and were later enacted by the agency.

I also turned to Nicole to represent the department and me internationally. She spoke at the United Nations in Geneva on "International Harmonization and Safety Regulations." She conducted an important bilateral with the Chinese government to prevent the sale of fraudulently-made automobile tires.

Nicole is an accomplished government executive, an experienced transportation leader and an individual with a high degree of personal integrity and character. Frankly, though, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, there are several people that Nicole could have had appear before you to attest to her record and the proven attributes of her character.

I responded very quickly to Nicole to appear on her behalf

because I believe Nicole's nomination is an important opportunity for this Senate and this Nation. Because of the convergence of certain factors, Nicole's nomination transcends the usual confirmation of one more subcabinet executive.

As this committee so well knows, I served in Congress for over 20 years. As recited by the Chairman, I was the Secretary of Commerce for a Democratic President and the Secretary of Transportation for a Republican President.

In all three of these positions, the key to any success that I had was persistent advocacy in seeking bipartisan collaboration whenever and wherever I could find it. This committee has done remarkable work with those tools and succeeded where others could not. Last year, your outstanding bipartisan work regarding our Nation's water infrastructure was a true public policy achievement benefitting every American.

As you know, our Nation's transportation infrastructure faces similar challenges at a time when bipartisanship can be a scarce commodity. I believe this committee has the opportunity once again to revive this essential practice of governance.

As many experts and pundits have indicated, infrastructure legislation is one of the best opportunities where this can occur. Having Nicole R. Nason as Federal Highway Administrator will assist the committee and this Congress in achieving this national need. She will strive to find common ground on a

bipartisan basis on which to achieve needed solutions.

She will be relentless in seeking opportunities and in the critical work the Federal Highway Administration will perform in working with you. She is the right person at the right time for this position. I know she will not let you down.

Mr. Chairman, because of that, I am grateful to Nicole for allowing me to appear before you and this committee to speak in support of her candidacy as Federal Highway Administrator.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be very pleased to answer any questions the Senators may have with respect to her nomination.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mineta follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you so very much, Mr. Secretary. As you said, others could have appeared here to introduce her but certainly in the opinion of the Chair and the entire committee, none more distinguished and none more welcome than you. We are delighted to have you. You are welcome to stay for the rest of the hearing.

Neither the Chair nor the committee has any questions for you but wish to wish you very well and you are always welcome to join us in this committee.

Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary.

Senator Carper. Mr. Secretary, before you leave, I leaned over while you were speaking and said to the Chairman, this Administration might contract you to come and speak. It might have more success than anything else I can think of.

It is great to see you, my friend. God bless you.

Senator Barrasso. Now we would like to welcome to the committee our nominee, Nicole Nason, the nominee to be the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. We are delighted to have you and congratulations on your nomination.

I want to remind you that your full written testimony will be made a part of the record. We all look forward to hearing your testimony today.

I know you have members of the family here if you would like to introduce them and additional introductions. When you

are finished, please proceed with your testimony.

STATEMENT OF NICOLE R. NASON, NOMINATED TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Ms. Nason. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Carper, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to be considered for the position of Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, FHWA, at the Department of Transportation.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to enable and empower the strengthening of a world-class highway system.

I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Chao for their confidence in my ability to serve in this critical role. I would also like to express my gratitude to Secretary Norman Mineta, not just for his appearance and his remarks today, but for his years of extraordinary service to our Country. His life story is incredible and he remains one of my personal heroes.

I am pleased to have with me today my husband, David. You briefly met my son, Brady, aged 10; my daughter, Abby, aged 14; and my daughter, Alex, aged 17. I am grateful for their love and support always. Although I recognize that they get to miss school today for this, I would like to think they would come even on a Saturday.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Carper, as you are aware, I am currently serving as the Assistant Secretary for Administration

at the State Department. My 1,900-plus employees and contractors at the A Bureau manage everything from logistics and shipping to building repairs to all departmental procurement.

I love my position but my heart is in transportation policy. That is why I was so excited and privileged when President Trump and Secretary Chao invited me to return to my roots at the Department of Transportation as the Federal Highway Administrator.

If confirmed, my first priority will be Secretary Chao's first priority, the safety of our transportation system. This focus unites the department across the modes and will remain top of mind for me always.

Having served as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and having spent several years on the National Board of Directors of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, I know the grim statistics all too well.

In 2017, as the Senator noted, there were 37,133 people killed in motor vehicle crashes. This is an appalling number and I believe the only acceptable number is zero.

If confirmed, I hope to focus particularly on pedestrian safety. I would like to work with State and local leaders and members of this body to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by focusing on improved road design and targeting our most dangerous intersections.

Secondly, if confirmed, I intend to work closely with my fellow administrators and colleagues at the DOT. I believe if we are to effectively respond to our serious transportation challenges, we need to work seamlessly.

I intend to collaborate with my federal colleagues in Washington, D.C. and all of our State, local and tribal government partners to eliminate barriers to project delivery and timely success.

For example, many new technologies cut across several modes and I will work with all of our partners on the development and safe integration of these technologies.

Third, if I am confirmed, I intend to visit our teams in the field. I would like to go out and meet with State, local and tribal partners to personally see their concerns and hear their ideas.

I learned while serving as NHTSA Administrator that it is important to get out of D.C. and understand the challenges firsthand.

Finally, I am aware of the role FHWA will play in the reauthorization of surface transportation legislation as the Fixing America Surface Transportation Act will expire at the end of fiscal year 2020.

I was proud part to play a part in helping shape SAFETEA-LU when I previously served at the department. I look forward to

the prospect of working together on any legislative efforts. As this committee knows well, there is not a one size fits all solution.

Mr. Chairman, as the daughter of a New York County motorcycle highway patrol officer, I grew up hearing about highway and vehicle safety. I clearly remember Dad's gruesome motorcycle crash while on the job and his extended recovery at home. His helmet with the crack in the back where his head smacked the pavement and knocked him unconscious was his gift to me when I was confirmed as NHTSA Administrator.

If confirmed as FHWA Administrator, I will proudly display the helmet in that office as well. The helmet was his reminder that there is a person and a family behind all the statistics, a reminder that we can and should always strive to do more.

Again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Carper, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. If confirmed, I commit to you that I will perform the role of FHWA Administrator with accountability to all stakeholders, especially the American public.

I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nason follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you for the incredible story of your father's commitment and service to the people of New York, the people of this Country, and you continuing his legacy and concern. We are grateful you are willing to take on this responsibility.

There are a couple of questions that you will get from members here. We ask that you answer those. They will also maybe have some written questions afterward. I hope you would respond to the questions throughout the hearing and respond to the questions afterwards for the record.

There are a couple of questions I have to ask as I do of all nominees on behalf of the committee.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this committee or designated members of this committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress and to provide information subject to appropriate and necessary security protections with respect to your responsibilities?

Ms. Nason. Yes, sir.

Senator Barrasso. Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, documents in electronic and other forms of information are provided to this committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Ms. Nason. Yes, sir.

Senator Barrasso. Do you know of any matters which you may

or may not have disclosed that might place you in a conflict of interest if you are confirmed?

Ms. Nason. No, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Let me start with questions.

As we mentioned, you previously served as the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and were confirmed by the Senate. During your tenure as Administrator, what did you learn regarding the need for federal policymakers to account for differences in priorities and circumstances among rural versus urban States? Obviously being from a rural area, how do you deal with that?

Ms. Nason. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At NHTSA during my tenure, we were very clear that there are unique needs of rural States and even rural communities. With my own State of New York, we always like to say not all of New York is Manhattan.

There are unique needs where I grew up. Infrastructure failings, aging roads, egress concerns which compare to the challenges of New York City, congestion and other quality of life issues, so we tend to focus on messaging, on a rural versus urban center because they have different transportation concerns, different safety concerns. Tribal governments have different safety concerns.

There is one thing we learned at NHTSA. We had a very

specific example of advertisements we were running. We learned that you cannot take the same commercial, no matter how much time and money you may have spent in producing and packaging it and expect it to have the same impact around the Country. It will not.

You have to know the specific challenges of those communities. That is something I think I can bring to FHWA if I am confirmed.

Senator Barrasso. If confirmed, can we be assured that you will work diligently to make sure the Federal Highway Administration is sensitive to the concerns of rural States like Wyoming?

Ms. Nason. Yes, of course.

Senator Barrasso. Many States and others have appeared before this committee strongly supporting the distribution of highway funds by the formula we have set up. They have told us that adequate formula funding is important because it provides the flexibility needed to plan effectively and that it enables States to put funds to work faster, a key issue for the States.

Do you agree that the existing formula programs do enable States to address their priorities more effectively and more expeditiously than trying to create new programs that are less well understood and would take time to establish?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

I think, from what I have heard and speaking with our partners from my experience at the State Department in the construction of embassies and consulates, what is most critical is the certainty in the funding stream.

I think that is something that if I am confirmed, I would be happy to work with you and the members of the committee to make sure that States can plan, which I think is most essential.

Senator Barrasso. You would also likely agree that there is unanimous consensus that transportation projects often take too long to complete and that we need to work together to find ways to further streamline the process while still protecting the environment.

We have heard testimony before this committee that suggests one of the reasons that projects are significantly slowed down is too many agencies are required to take action to approve a single project.

Instead of being done concurrently, they are being done consecutively. You have to wait for one and then another and another. How important is streamlining to timely project delivery and how can we best achieve it?

Ms. Nason. I think streamlining, as you noted, is essential for helping resolve and making improvements more quickly. Having served as the NHTSA Administrator at a time when we were raising CAFE standards for the first time in many,

many years, I can tell you it is a challenge even internally to bring everyone to the table and resolve interagency concerns.

I think that is a role where FHWA can be quite helpful. If I am confirmed as FHWA Administrator, that is a leadership responsibility that I would like to take on.

Senator Barrasso. We tend to be amazed at the power of innovation, vehicles coming onto the market right now that keep drivers from leaving their lanes, even hit the brakes in an emergency.

Within the next decade, I think we are likely to see even greater advances in connected and autonomous vehicles. The innovations have the potential to provide significant safety and efficiency benefits, I think, to the traveling public.

We had a discussion last night where people said, will I ever actually want to buy another car or will I just use a ride-sharing service for people living in major cities. What role should the Federal Highway Administration play in preparing our roadways and communities, both rural and urban, for the arrival of these new technologies?

Ms. Nason. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I noted in my opening statement, I think it is going to be very important for modal administrators, all modal administrators at the Department of Transportation to work together and to share research and best data because many of

these technologies cut across the modes in impact, NHTSA, but also Federal Motor Carrier and Federal Highways.

If I am confirmed as Federal Highway Administration Administrator, I will work closely with my colleagues to make sure we are providing the best data and information to all of our partners.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you and congratulations again.

Ms. Nason. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. Senator Carper.

Senator Carper. I would like to follow up on the Chairman's question with respect to environmental streamlining. I would like to look a little bit at the federal-state partnership as a recovering governor. I would like to dwell a bit on safety.

I want to start with climate change. My neighbor to my left, my Delmarva buddy, Senator Cardin, and we have another Maryland Senator here, Chris Van Hollen, who will join us later I suspect but we live in an area where the land is sinking and the seas are rising. In fact, Delaware is the lowest lying State in America. It is of great concern to us.

I have a son in California. North of where he lives, they had these incredible wildfires in Oregon, Washington and Montana, much bigger than Delaware, if you can believe that. In Ellicott City, which Senator Cardin and Senator Van Hollen

represent, as I recall they had two 500-year floods, two 1,000-year floods within 20 months of each other.

Some people think climate change is not real, it is esoteric. It is real. We see it every day. Our transportation system is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, the greatest source of carbon is from our vehicles as it turns out today.

Our transportation system is highly vulnerable to impact from extreme weather according to the National Climate Assessment report released by 13 federal agencies across the Trump Administration. This is a quote of what they said: "Expected increases in the severity and frequency of heavy precipitation events will affect inland infrastructure in every region, including access to roads, the viability of bridges, and the safety of pipelines."

For my whole life, we have measured rainfall by inches. Now, we measure rainfall, in some instances, by the foot.

As the Federal Highway Administrator, you are going to have an opportunity to influence highway roadway design, availability of vehicle charging and fueling infrastructure, and space for safe walking and bicycling.

How will you use your leadership to address how our vehicle and travel patterns accelerate and exacerbate climate change? How would you propose to ensure that infrastructure is resilient

to extreme weather?

Ms. Nason. Thank you, Senator Carper.

I wrote down what you said, "Our roads are vulnerable to extreme weather." Having grown up on the very east end of Long Island, we lived through hurricanes regularly and our roads would flood. Then there is no egress and often there is no second egress because there was a ferry. That is not an option either.

I spent my life watching my father, as a first responder, go out in extreme weather and help respond to these challenges, particularly on our roads when peoples' instinct is to get in a car and try to drive away and then they are trapped.

I am very interested in seeing what the Federal Highway Administration can do to improve resiliency in our transportation system as a whole. I think there is a lot of good research and data that FHWA can provide to State and local governments and the leadership role that FHWA can play.

If confirmed, I would be happy to work with you on those issues.

Senator Carper. Let us talk a bit more about environmental streamlining. The Chairman touched on it.

This Administration finally filled a number of key positions within the Administration that deal with streamlining. For the first I would say almost year and a half of this

Administration, people responsible for dealing with streamlining and working to facilitate building of roads, highways, bridges, those positions were not filled. I am told by my staff that as of the beginning of this year, most of them have been filled.

One of the greatest holdups in moving projects has been the lack of people in the right positions. I think that has been dealt with and that is good.

This committee has provided numerous streamlining measures in both MAP-21 in 2012 and the FAST Act, two major transportation reauthorization bills, the latter was in 2015. Many of these new authorities were only just finalized in Federal Highway Administration regulations just a couple months ago, as you may know.

If you are confirmed, will you commit to providing our committee with updates on how these streamlining measures are having an impact on project timelines and performance of how the FHWA is ensuring that environmental outcomes are being protected and improved?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator Carper. I know there were many new, interesting proposals in MAP-21 and FAST for environmental streamlining that FHWA is working to administer. If I am confirmed, I will provide you with an update.

Senator Carper. I will just say this and close.

It sounds like we have the right people in place within

this Administration to do a better job on environmental streamlining. We have spent a lot of time, energy and effort in this committee in the last half a dozen years or more writing legislation focused on environmental streamlining.

We need to find out what is working. We are going to count on you to tell us what is working and maybe what is not.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Nason. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. Senator Capito.

Senator Capito. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Mineta. It is nice to see you again.

I want to thank you for your willingness to serve the public, for your career at NHTSA and also at the State Department. That demonstrates that you are unquestionably qualified for the position.

I would like to thank your daughter, Alex, for her great studied decision to be attending my alma mater, Duke University next year. Obviously you are going in the right direction.

In our meeting, thank you for coming to our office, we discussed that the position you are up for is so important to all of us because it helps us interact with all of our constituents. We get a lot of constituent issues around transportation issues, small ones and large ones.

As you know, in West Virginia, we have Corridor H which is

the last section of the Appalachian Development Highway System that needs to be completed. Because of the way we have treated the Appalachian Development Highway System, it is now funded out of the Highway Trust Fund.

I just wanted a commitment from you, we talked about it, that you would move forward with me to try to find the easiest and best way, most efficient way, to complete that Corridor H part of that system.

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator. Of course I know how passionate you are about that. I would be pleased to work with you.

Senator Capito. Thank you.

By the way, Secretary Chao is fantastic, as you know. You will have a great leader at that department.

The one question I get a lot is can you do an infrastructure package outside of the highway bill, a bipartisan infrastructure package. I think all of us would like to do it but there are a whole lot of deep questions.

One of the questions was the funding issue when it came forward over the last Congress. One of the things that the Administration asked for was to get in the game, what private monies can be acquired or what kind of State dollars?

I would just like to tout my own State of West Virginia which passed a \$1.5 billion bond called the campaign, not by the Governor but by others, FTDR, Fix the ____ Roads, because people

are very passionate about the safety aspects and are on the roads in rural areas all the time.

As we are thinking about this, it was obvious that we were going to be able to use that new State share as part of our match. I want to put that in your hat as you move forward that any proposal, I think, has to look at what the States are willing to do, what kind of skin in the game States are going to have and hopefully, we can elongate that timeline a little bit to go back to the past to scoop up some of these projects like our State that move forward with that.

I would like to ask you if we could work together on that as we are developing hopefully the infrastructure package, but also the highway bill as well?

Ms. Nason. Yes, of course, Senator, I would be pleased to work with you.

Senator Capito. Thank you.

Both Senators talked about streamlining in the permitting process. One of the things that as we see particularly rural States falling behind in the deployment of rural broadband, one of the ways I think we are able to kind of make it more affordable is the dig once proposition, working with the Department of Transportation.

We were on a bill last year, Senator Hatch had a bill, the Highway Right of Way Permitting Efficiency Act. We can work

with the Department of Transportation, with the FCC, with the States, broadband councils and others to be able, while you are digging and while you are improving a highway, either new or maintaining, you can also use that as a way to run the high efficiency broadband into these rural areas that if left to their own devices, it is extremely expensive.

I do not know if this is something you have actually thought about. I know it is probably premature but do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Nason. Senator, I appreciate the question because we do spend time at the State Department talking about IG. As you know, it is not just 3G plus 2. It is a game changer so I think there may be interesting opportunities to save time and money for States.

I would be happy to work with you on this if I am confirmed.

Senator Capito. Yes, it just seems as though we get it our own way on something like this that is really not controversial. It is not controversial. Actually, I ran into a Federal Highway project that actually did provide the channel for the high speed Internet, although there is the cabling and everything but there was nothing in there. It was prepared for it so when and if, it is already ready and it saves a lot of money.

In terms of the safety issues, you mentioned pedestrian and

cyclist safety. You mentioned congestion at intersections. I have read several stories here in D.C. with some very tragic outcomes of pedestrian safety.

Do you have any thoughts? Is it educating the American public; is it making signaling better? Is it the driver or is it all the above? What perspectives might you have on that?

Ms. Nason. Senator Capito, thank you.

I think it is all of the above so we always talk about the ease. We need to educate, we need to enforce, but we also need to engineer better. That is a piece where I think Federal Highway could provide some very valuable information and data. It would be something I could work on with my colleagues at NHTSA and in the department to see what improvements we could make.

Senator Capito. I would really encourage you there because that to me is just so preventable and the results of tragedies.

Thank you. Good luck. I plan on supporting you.

Ms. Nason. Thank you.

Senator Capito. Good luck at Duke.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you, Senator Capito.

Senator Cardin.

Senator Cardin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Nason, thank you. Thank you for your willingness to serve and we thank your family because this is a family

sacrifice. Thank you all very much for sharing your loved one with the government. We appreciate it.

To Norm Mineta, it is great to see you. I had the opportunity to serve with Congressman Mineta and see his talent as chairman of our committee. I know his reputation as Mayor of San Jose and really a mentor to many of us that are serving today. Norm, thank you for your extraordinary leadership.

You have a really good person introducing you. That was a smart decision you made.

Ms. Nason. My secret weapon.

Senator Cardin. Yes. It was the right thing to do.

I really want to underscore what the Chairman said about this committee being able to work in a bipartisan manner to produce a strong bill. We did that with water and we want to do that with the reauthorization of surface transportation and perhaps other infrastructure bills.

However, we are going to need your help because, as you said, you want predictable funding for transportation. I think this committee would like to make sure that we have long term predictability, so the longer term the reauthorization, the better it is for local governments that depend upon projects that go for multiple years to have the federal partnership understood.

It has to be adequate funding. That is going to be the

real challenge. There are Democrats and Republicans who want to work together, who want to come up with a bipartisan plan but it is going to take your work with us in order to give us a path forward so we can accomplish those goals. Are you ready for that?

Ms. Nason. I am ready for those, interesting conversations.

Senator Cardin. I thank you.

I want to follow up on Senator Capito's point and your point on bicycle and pedestrian safety because we do have a program under the FAST Act that helps the TAP Program, the Transportation Alternative Program, which are funds that go to the local governments, the county governments so that they can plan in their community to try to protect pedestrians and the bicyclists by using a small amount of money for paths, trails and those types of issues. This is a bipartisan commitment to establish that program.

As we work towards the reauthorization, will you work with us to see whether we can perhaps strengthen that program so that we can reduce the growing number of fatalities with bicyclists and pedestrians, so we can work to try to deal with that using the existing tool of the Transportation Alternative Programs, perhaps enhancing that?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator Cardin. If I am confirmed as

Federal Highway Administrator, I would very much like to work with you and your staff to see what enhancements we can make to already existing programs.

Senator Cardin. I appreciate that. I think this is a program that does work. The challenge, of course, is it is a little bit unusual because first of all, the money goes directly to the local government and bypasses the States which they do not always like.

Secondly, of course, it is for local enhancements which, at times, get lost as we look at the challenges we have.

I want to underscore the point that Senator Carper made in regard to climate change and resiliency. It is a major challenge we have, a major challenge in maintaining our existing transportation infrastructure as we look for new but it also recognizes we have to do things in a smarter way in order for public investments to have its maximum advantage.

Are you prepared to work with us based upon what science is telling us so that our infrastructure investments are done in the best way, recognizing that these extreme weather conditions are becoming more frequent?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator. I think Federal Highway could be a center of excellence for collection of good data and research. I would be pleased to work with you if I am confirmed.

Senator Cardin. I want to talk about the multimodal

concepts. It took me a shade under two hours to get here today from Baltimore. That is a good time. It usually takes me longer than that. A commute that should be 45 minutes usually takes me about 2 hours and 15 minutes. I think it was the weather forecast that kept some people off the roads today so I made it a little bit faster.

We live in the worst congested area in the Country. We really need to invest in multimodal. We have to get people out of cars into transit. We need to deal with the issues of the commuter rails. We have to deal with all of the above.

Are you prepared to use your leadership, if confirmed, so that we have a sensible, multimodal transportation commitment to be as friendly as we can to reduce congestion in the most environmentally friendly way?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator. Peoples' transportation needs are diverse. There are a lot of factors that go into choosing how you get from one place to another from time to cost. I would be happy to work with you on those issues if I am confirmed.

Senator Cardin. I appreciate that and I look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Braun.

Senator Braun. Thank you.

It was a pleasure meeting you the other day.

I am from Indiana and we have a lot to address in infrastructure needs. You have to look forward. It is a very capital intensive thing. Our current budget and the condition it is in, where interest is dominating a big portion of it but mostly when it comes to the fact that we seem to be the least capable of taking on a big project like infrastructure across the Country just like we were in Indiana, to keep maintenance in line and actually do new stuff.

Do you think it is realistic to maintain and 80-20 traditional funding role to really accomplish what the Nation's needs would be?

Ms. Nason. Thank you, Senator.

As you and I discussed, Indiana has made some strong choices regarding investment. The question of match and how we are going to finance the next legislative proposal, whatever this committee chooses to do, is one that I do not think FHWA should dictate but be a part of the conversations because, as you know, what works in Indiana does not work in New York.

I would be happy to work with you as we move forward on legislation to see whether we have the right balance.

Senator Braun. Thank you.

My personal opinion is we are going to have to come up with

something new.

In Indiana, we were creative. We did what was called a Community Crossings Program which was to challenge counties and cities to actually put skin in the game. Of course they universally complained about it in its formulation. They indicated that was the State's responsibility. All I can tell you is it has been an overwhelming success.

Do you think that States that put more of their own skin in the game should receive some type of priority when it comes to federal funds that are going to be increasingly scarce?

Ms. Nason. I do think States which have demonstrated leadership are States that we can work closely with and learn from, how they were able to message and what their success was, certainly a State like Indiana.

I would be happy to work with you on whatever changes this committee decides to make in the next legislation.

Senator Braun. I would like to ask you to give some thought to how you think a similar dynamic might work because it is my opinion that if we are going to address infrastructure needs, it is going to take something different from what we have had leading up to this point.

In general, on infrastructure, it is not only the condition of maintenance but there are so many new things that need to be done. In your opinion, when it comes to maintenance of roads

and bridges, where do you think it really is on the federal landscape?

I can tell you when we looked at it in Indiana, probably back in 2015, almost half a percent of our roads and bridges were headed in the wrong direction. Until we basically doubled our stream of funding, we were going to let that trajectory continue.

How are you sizing up the federal picture? Is it similar to what we saw in Indiana or do you think maintenance is less of an issue and new construction might be the bigger challenge?

Ms. Nason. I do think they are both important but I think maintenance is particularly critical. It is a place where Federal Highways can be very supportive and provide good information. They do condition and performance reports, for example, annually on the state of our bridges across the Country, not just state by state but how we are looking nationwide, where and how we need to invest. I think, if confirmed, Federal Highways has a lot of good information we can share with the Senators.

Senator Braun. Very good.

In summary of everything we talked about, please give thought and focus on how we get enterprising, responsible States to maybe have some preference when it comes to engaging and if they are willing to put more skin in the game that maybe they

should get more of the scarce federal dollars.

Ms. Nason. Thank you.

Senator Braun. Thank you. I yield.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much, Senator Braun.

Senator Whitehouse.

Senator Whitehouse. Thank you, Chairman.

Welcome, Assistant Secretary Nason. We are glad to have you here.

Secretary Chao appeared before this committee in May of 2017. When she did, I asked her how sea level rise is affecting our coastal infrastructure. As you and I discussed in my office, Rhode Island has 400 miles of coast, and the measured sea level rise is a very serious and significant issue for us.

The Secretary agreed to look into the issue, and I followed up with a letter to her that I would ask to be made a part of the record of the hearing.

Senator Barrasso. Without objection.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Whitehouse. Before receiving the Secretary's formal response, we managed to get our hands on the draft response, the letter that the career staff sent up to the Secretary's office for her final approval. Then shortly after that, we got the letter from the Secretary's office.

When you compare the two letters, you see some pretty significant, notable differences, which I have redlined here. One is that the phrase "sea level rise" here is struck out of the career letter and the word "rise" is replaced with "variations." The term "variations" implies wrongly that the sea level rise that we're seeing now in Rhode Island is consistent with natural changes over geologic time, when in fact, the current rise in sea levels is a direct consequence of human activity, of carbon pollution, and it is occurring at rates that humankind hasn't seen in thousands and thousands of years. And we actually measure this stuff at Naval Station Newport.

So there is that change. Then down here, the political staff presumably of the Secretary's office, struck out "environmental conditions such as extreme weather events and climate change." Well, we live in Rhode Island, in a world of extreme weather events and climate change. I think we all do.

So what worries me about this is that it looks like we are seeing political censoring for ideological purposes. And I

think that the climate denial and the censoring and the nonsense has got to stop. We may have disagreements about what to do about climate change; we ought to be having a bipartisan discussion about solutions. But this business of just striking it out of letters so that it doesn't even come up, and we are not even allowed to talk about it, is ridiculous.

So it forces me to ask you your assurance that you will not censor and ignore the facts and the science in the manner in which you go about your duties as a Federal Highway Administrator.

Ms. Nason. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse. I am unfamiliar with this issue, and I haven't seen the letter.

Senator Whitehouse. And I don't expect you to defend the letter or any of this. My point is that this is a continuing problem, dealing with this Administration. For those of us that have coastal infrastructure and that are coastal States, to have a Federal Highway Administrator who will pay attention to real facts and real science is a matter of importance.

Ms. Nason. At NHTSA we always said, good data is king.

Senator Whitehouse. Good.

Ms. Nason. And I am a firm believer in good data, so I can commit to you that we will give you the best possible information. I also wrote down the words political retaliation. That is not something that I have ever accepted, either at the

State Department or at NHTSA. I have never seen any indications of that, but I can assure you I would not support having staff feel intimidated for any reason.

Senator Whitehouse. Good. One of the reasons that this is important is this Providence Journal headline from just a few days ago, Climate Change: Washed Away, Home Values Lost to Rising Sea Levels. What the study that formed the basis for this front page above-the-fold article in my home State newspaper shows is that Rhode Island has lost nearly \$45 million in home appreciation values between 2005 and 2017.

It is the Rhode Island part of a study that began in Florida and went up the coast through New Jersey. It hit Massachusetts, so when it hit Rhode Island, so Senator Markey had the same study now. If you look at all the different States that have been reviewed in this what was originally a peer-reviewed study in Florida, and has moved, the same methodology, to cover other States, there is a total of \$15 billion lost in coastal home values.

That is a big deal for these families and businesses. And it can't be ignored. They are not alone. If you go on to look at their report, pull up the other one, here is what one of the authors of the report said: "Each time we analyze a new State, we see the same phenomenon. Increased tidal flooding leads to a loss in home value appreciation. As sea level rise accelerates,

we expect a corresponding loss in relative home value to accelerate as well.”

I can't ignore that. And I can't allow Administration agencies to ignore that, either.

Go on to Freddie Mac. Freddie Mac is not an environmental organization, it is not a green organization, it is not a Democrat organization. It is a housing organization. And what Freddie Mac has warned is that rising sea levels and spreading flood plains appear likely to destroy billions of dollars in property and to displace millions of people. The economic losses and social disruption may happen gradually, but they are likely to be greater in total than those experienced in the housing crisis and great recession.

I just want to make those points, because it shows how important it is to us to be getting fair and factual and properly based scientific determinations out of our federal agencies. Because this stuff is serious and it is big and it is coming at us.

Thank you to the Chairman for letting me go over my time.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much, Senator Whitehouse.

Senator Sullivan.

Senator Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Nason, welcome. Thank you for your service.

I was looking at your bio. You might not know this, but are

you the first potential Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration who is a black belt in karate?

Ms. Nason. You know, I don't know if they keep that statistic. I might be.

[Laughter.]

Senator Sullivan. I just through that was interesting.

Senator Barrasso. I would point out she is the first one that actually has a TED Talk online of talking about her and showing in action her black belt abilities.

Senator Sullivan. So if you ever have any issues with Senator Whitehouse -

[Laughter.]

Senator Whitehouse. I yield without the necessity of any application of force.

[Laughter.]

Senator Sullivan. Just thought I might warn him. You have to be careful with her.

Anyway, listen, I wanted to talk briefly about another area where States lose money, and I think it is really important. That relates to permitting time lines. Particularly infrastructure time lines.

My State, the great State of Alaska, is kind of ground zero on groups that like to delay and slow and shut down any kind of infrastructure. We are very resource-rich State, but

infrastructure-poor State, almost 10,000 miles of roads, which probably is not much more than a lot smaller States in our Country.

So what we have experienced, let me just give you a couple of examples. The King Cove Road, that is a road on the Aleutian Island chain, the Trump Administration finally approved that. That took about maybe 30 years, 12 miles. A twelve-mile road, dirt road. Took almost 20 years to permit a gold mine in Alaska, because of litigation. By the way, it is the Kensington Mine, it employs almost 400 people at an average wage of \$100,000. But 20 years of fighting and ridiculous delays on that.

Took seven years to permit an exploration well in Alaska, and \$7 billion. Shell tried to do that and the last Administration made sure that it almost took a decade. It takes on average in America seven years to permit a bridge. Took over eight years, almost a decade, to permit the Keystone Pipeline.

This is just ridiculous, and it hurts States, it hurts average citizens. It hurts the Country. I guarantee it doesn't take 19 years on average to go from permitting a highway, your job, to completion. Nine to 19 years. I don't think China permits roads in a two-decade time period.

So can I get your commitment to work with this Administration? I do think it is a bipartisan issue, by the

way. I don't think my colleagues on the other side of the aisle think 20 years to permit a highway is a good idea. Can I get your commitment to work with this committee on permitting reform in a way that makes sense for the average American? This is not a partisan issue. Seven years to permit a bridge is madness.

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator, I would be happy to work with you and members of the committee.

Senator Sullivan. I have a bill called the Rebuild America Now Act. It looks at common-sense permitting reforms, particularly for infrastructure and highways, to do what most Americans want, which is not cut corners on the environment, but not take a decade to permit a piece of infrastructure. Can I get your commitment to work with me and this committee on those issues?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator, I would be pleased to review that legislation and work with you.

Senator Sullivan. Let me ask, I also want to get your commitment to come to Alaska. Like I said, we have a lot of unique challenges in my State, some of which relate to permitting. There are certain groups that usually don't live in my State that want to make sure you can't build a road in Alaska, even though most States and communities can build roads. They seem to want to make sure we can't build roads.

But one of the things, the FHWA recently put out a guidance

memo that I would like to sit down with you and discuss a little bit more. It significantly shortens the time line on when the construction projects and seasons close. As you might know, in Alaska, we have a really short construction season relative to any other State because of our long winters. So can I get a commitment from you to work with me just on some of the elements of that memo? Just because I don't think it looks at unique aspects of different States, particularly different construction time lines.

Ms. Nason. Senator, first of all, I haven't' been to Alaska in many years. I would be pleased to go, with you and your staff.

Senator Sullivan. Good. Great. We would love to host you there.

Ms. Nason. Always a beautiful trip.

Senator Sullivan. Good. And then finally, just if you haven't, and I am running out of time here, but your vision, I know you laid it out in your opening statement, but can you list very quickly your top three priorities on what you want to get done as the Administrator?

Ms. Nason. Sure. Thank you, Senator.

I would like to focus, of course, on safety. But I am particularly interested in pedestrian and cyclist safety, which was an issue I didn't get to spend that much time on at NHTSA.

We had so many Congressional mandates that we were trying to implement. So that is something I would like to go back to, and I think Federal Highways can be very important there.

I also think there is a lot of interesting new technologies that are very cross-cutting across the modes. So I would like to work with my fellow modal administrators to see what the advantages and disadvantages of these new technologies are and how can we implement them safely.

Third, I would like to travel. I would like to go and meet people where they are. That was very important at NHTSA, to go and visit communities locally, instead of bringing everyone to Washington, to hear first-hand about the challenges they are facing. So that would be something I would like to work on.

Senator Sullivan. Great. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Senator Markey.

Senator Markey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Cape Cod, economic pillar, Massachusetts, recreational oasis. But only accessible by, on land, by two bridges build in the 1930s by the Army Corps of Engineers. They are deteriorating and we are going to need some help in order to make sure that we have, in the 21st century, as good a system as we had in the 20th century. The Army Corps owns the bridges.

It is currently conducting a study to evaluate options for replacing the bridge, which could cost up to \$600 million. The Army Corps' entire budget is only \$6 billion a year that they have to use to support every one of their programs.

So we are going to be in a process of talking to the Army Corps, which we are already about this. And as we talk about a surface transportation bill, which the Chairman is talking about bringing through this committee, I am going to be fighting to make sure the Federal Highway Administration has the resources and the authorities it needs to help replace these bridges.

Would you commit to work with me on this very complex project?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator Markey. As you know, I am in Connecticut. I have friends who leave for Cape Cod at 2:00 in the morning so they can avoid the traffic, so I would be happy to work with you on that.

Senator Markey. Excellent. So you are an expert on this.

Ms. Nason. I have never been stuck on the bridge.

Senator Markey. Yes. Mark Twain used to say an expert is anyone who lives more than 200 miles away from the problem. So people now have to anticipate getting up at 2:00, knowing that there is a problem they are going to have to deal with when they hit those bridges at Cape Cod.

Senator Whitehouse has already talked about the impacts of

climate change on our highway system. What I would ask from you is that you would work with us to encourage transportation planning organizations to reduce vehicle miles traveled, curb greenhouse gas emissions when using Federal funding for highway projects. Can you make that commitment to us?

Ms. Nason. Yes.

Senator Markey. Thank you. Next, we have an increasing problem, again related to climate change, because it clearly is having an impact on the ability for people even to escape. We have seen that in Hurricane Harvey, Irma, Maria, western wildfires, flooding in the Midwest, to name a few. The Federal Highway Administration has found that many of the Nation's critical mass evacuation routes face a series of impediments, including evacuation planning equipment acquisition, resiliency and capacity. Would you support providing more resources to State and local governments to improve the ability of people to get out of harm's way?

Ms. Nason. Again, Senator, having grown up on the very east end of Long Island and been stuck, and being the daughter of a first responder, I understand how frightening it is for people when they are trapped during any kind of catastrophic weather event. So I would be pleased to work with you, if I am confirmed, to make sure that are building greater resiliency into our system.

Senator Markey. I am going to re-introduce my ESCAPE Act, Enhancing the Strength and Capacity of America's Primary Evacuation Routes, as legislation. I would love to work with you on that as we are moving with the Surface Transportation Bill, which the committee is going to be considering.

Then finally, it is on cybersecurity, it is on the issue of the connected car era that is about to dramatically expand. We already have it, but it is going to be on steroids. Every vehicle will be a computer on wheels, and gathering massive amounts of data about each and every person, each and every family, each and every child in those vehicles. Everything that they are doing is going to be inside of a data base.

But it will also be gathered because there will be a digitization of the roads, bridges, other transportation infrastructure. So I want to work with you on the issue of cybersecurity as we are now planning in the next generation, the 21st generation of all of this infrastructure. Because this information, historically, has just been within the family. Now, the government will have access to it as well. Could you talk about that a little bit?

Ms. Nason. Senator Markey, we spend, as the Assistant Secretary for Administration at the State Department, as you know, State spends a great deal of time talking about cybersecurity, more in closed briefings than open. But it is an

issue that as the chief procurement officer, the whole procurement team is spending more and more time on thinking about, where is our tech coming from, who are the providers who are supporting it, what data is it collecting, where is it being stored. So I would be pleased to work with you on that.

Senator Markey. Great. So on the one hand we don't want FHWA to be compromising the privacy, but we also don't want our own federal government to be compromising the information of people as they innocently are driving the roads and bridges of our Country. It should be their business, not the business of the Federal highway Administration. So I want to work with you on that as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you, Senator Markey. Senator Gillibrand.

Senator Gillibrand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this hearing, thank you for your testimony.

Ms. Nason, the construction of the highway system remains one of the most transformative achievements in our Nation's history. While these highways connected cities and towns from coast to coast and to the global market, the construction of this system too often destroyed communities, particularly minority communities.

I have seen first hand in my State where Robert Moses steamrolled historic neighborhoods in order to build highways

that served commuters, often at the expense of those who lived there. Interstate 81 cut through neighborhoods in Syracuse, severing residents from the broader community and limiting their economic opportunity.

The I-81 viaduct through downtown Syracuse is now past its useful life and the State is studying options for replacement. After conversations with community stakeholders in Syracuse, I have voiced my support for the construction of a street-level community grid to replace the elevated portion of I-81 as a way to revitalize all of Syracuse's downtown and connect all of the community to opportunity. Communities across our Country face similar decisions as our infrastructure continues to age.

This creates real opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past and reimagine how we build a transportation infrastructure to be more equitable. What role should the Federal Government play in addressing the past Federal Highway projects that marginalize some communities, especially minority communities?

Ms. Nason. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. As a New Yorker, I certainly know who Robert Moses was. I have been stuck on that parkway.

I agree that the system was transformative. I think Federal Highways is in a place where, not to dictate to State and local governments, but to make sure that we are working with

MPOs and State and locals that are planning for connectivity of all communities, and to help provide good information and the best data possible, so that States and local and tribal governments can make better decisions about making sure that all communities are connected and benefited.

Senator Gillibrand. That sounds good. What do you think the Nation can do to prioritize economic and environmental justice in our transportation planning?

Ms. Nason. I don't want to overstate Federal Highways' role. But I do think there are many ways that we can work with our partners, associations, MPOs and others, to make sure that we are thinking through and we are asking some of these tough questions of State and local governments, and to make sure that they are thinking through all of the challenges.

Senator Gillibrand. Thank you. Different topic. Truck underrides are a major cause of death and injury on our Nation's federal highways. Last year, the National Sheriff's Association was the first law enforcement organization to endorse the Stop Underrides Act, a bipartisan bill. They endorsed this bill because day in and day out, they witness the aftermath of underride crashes and have experienced the loss of their fellow law enforcement officers in these accidents.

First responders know that their own safety and the safety of the public that they serve continues to be put needlessly at

risk every day because we don't have effective and comprehensive truck underride protection. Drawing on your experience from NHTSA, do you believe it is necessary to update the 1998 USDOT rulemaking to require stronger performance standards for rear underride guards?

Ms. Nason. Senator, I know there was a horrific crash in upstate New York. And putting on my NHTSA hat for a minute, I can say that we are always interested in knowing if there is better data.

Senator Gillibrand. Right.

Ms. Nason. And reviewing and updating standards, I believe IHS has some new information that they might be able to share and provide additional information that Federal Highways, again as I noted in my opening statement, I hope to work very closely with the NHTSA Administrator, with Federal Motor Carriers.

Senator Gillibrand. I would like to work with you to make sure we get better data collection, and we can do a more comprehensive solution to this urgent crisis.

Ms. Nason. Sure.

Senator Gillibrand. Similarly, last October, 20 people died in a horrific limousine crash in Schoharie, New York, making it the deadliest transportation accident in the United States in nine years. Since the accident, many concerns have been raised about the safety of stretch limousines, and the loopholes in our

Federal safety laws that result in lower occupant safety standards for these vehicles, relative to other vehicles on the road.

Additionally, this accident occurred at a notoriously dangerous intersection on New York State Route 30. If confirmed, will you work with States and local officials to ensure that dangerous intersections are a top priority? As well, will you work to ensure that FHWA is doing everything possible to respond to local concerns about safety of potential dangerous intersections, and to make sure communities can mitigate those dangers that exist?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator, that was a horrific crash. I would be pleased, if confirmed, to have FHWA work with State and local governments regarding dangerous intersections.

Senator Gillibrand. And I will submit my last two questions for the record. One is about using local work force to do large infrastructure projects, and the second is to talk about extreme weather and climate-related events having a huge impact on our transportation infrastructure. I will submit those for the record. Will you submit answers for those?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator.

Senator Gillibrand. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Senator

Carper.

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to submit for the record the January 2018 GAO report entitled Highway and Transit Projects into the record, as it relates to environmental reviews. GAO notes, and had previously reported, that 99 percent of projects are not being held up by complex NEPA reviews. Federal Highway Administration officials expressed that categorical exclusions still constitute the vast majority of NEPA reviews for highway projects. I ask unanimous consent.

Senator Barrasso. Without objection.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Carper. Thank you, sir.

A couple of short questions, and I would invite a short answer okay?

Ms. Nason. Yes.

Senator Carper. Do you believe that a Federal-State partnership is a critical cornerstone of the Federal Aid Highway Program, and can you commit to continuing and even strengthening that cooperation between FHWA and its State, local and tribal partners?

Ms. Nason. I agree it is a critical partnership.

Senator Carper. Thank you. Here is another hard one. In 2017, the most recent year for which data are available, nearly 7,000 non-motorized users were killed. What will you do as FHWA to begin dramatically lowering these unacceptable numbers?

Ms. Nason. Yes, Senator. I think I may not be as quick, but I do think there are plenty of places where FHWA -

Senator Carper. It was a couple of weeks.

Ms. Nason. From when we talked about pedestrian and cyclist safety. But most important in my testimony, having served at the department, I know how important it is for modal administrators to work together and to share information and data. I think FHWA, when focusing on safety, needs to work hand in glove with NHTSA, with Federal Motor Carriers, with even rail partners, to make sure that we are addressing the problems and

we are providing good information for solutions for our State and local and tribal government partners.

Senator Carper. A related question. A highway network is a crucial means of travel, as we know. However, it is also just one component of a much larger, more complex transportation system. What are your plans, what would be your plans to modernize our highway system in a way that seamlessly integrates into modes such as transit, such as rail, aviation, water and active transportation?

Ms. Nason. I think having that multi-modal conversation is going to be essential. I trust that this is something this committee will be talking about as we move forward on legislation.

One thing we have found at the State Department that is quite effective is traveling together. So rather than having a visit from diplomatic security and then a visit from the Administration and then a visit from Budget, we go together and we talk about problems together. We break off into different rooms, maybe, but then we come back together to have a more comprehensive conversation with all of our partners. That may be something that we could explore, I think, at DOT.

Senator Carper. There is an African proverb that goes something like this, if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, travel together.

Will you support new technologies that can help to improve multi-modal connectivity?

Ms. Nason. Yes.

Senator Carper. And here is not an easy question. This is a hard one. It is a hard one for all of us.

The 800-pound gorilla in the room on Surface Transportation has been and remains how we are going to pay for this stuff. And I am not going to put you on the spot and say, how would you pay for it. But I would like to ask you to, just to give us a couple of ideas of things that you are aware of, I will just give you an example, vehicle miles traveled. We have a number of States that are involved in a pilot program that stretches from ocean to ocean. And we hope to learn a lot from that and to maybe be able to move in that direction later in the next decade.

But give us a couple of ideas that you think we should consider as we try to figure out how to address this large and growing shortfall in funding surface transportation.

Ms. Nason. I think most importantly, Senator, as Secretary Chao has said, all options are on the table right now for the Administration. I know some States are participating in the VMT pilot program and that might turn out to be very effective and provide very good data. Other States are looking at P3s, some States have raised the gas tax. We have registration fees.

I think there are a variety of options, and one thing we have been, I know the Secretary has been -

Senator Carper. Let me just ask you a question. Why do you think it is so hard for us to deal with this issue? Why do you think it is so hard? States have, you just mentioned, States have, Wyoming is among them, a number of States, 30 or so States have addressed these issues, about user fees. They have found remarkably, the legislators that vote for them, the governors that support them, get re-elected. It is kind of amazing.

But we can't find some, we can't summon the wherewithal to do that.

Ms. Nason. I think part of the challenge is because the needs are so diverse. I spend my weekends in Vermont. It is an entirely different community than my days in D.C. And the drive from D.C. to Connecticut to Vermont changes dramatically as we go. In one place I have EZ Pass and there is no problem, and in another place, I am on a very narrow two-lane road, and I am hoping it has been plowed, because they have different weather challenges than we have in D.C.

So I think because the needs are so different, that is why the solutions need to be different.

Senator Carper. All right. Thanks. Thanks for that.

I just want to say to Brady and Abby and Alex, I want to

thank you for showing up today. I know it is hard to miss school, but you are good to have done it. I have been watching their faces, how they just seem to be reveling in the moment.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. But I just want to say that your husband has kept them in tow. I don't know if my wife and I, when our boys were your age, if they would have done this.

But we are glad you did, and we are glad you didn't make any faces or roll your eyes at inappropriate times when your mom was talking. Thank you for joining us today.

Ms. Nason. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you, Senator Carper.

We have a number of letters of support for your nomination. The committee has received numerous letters, including letters from former Federal Transportation officials, representatives of State transportation departments, infrastructure industry stakeholders. I am asking unanimous consent to enter this large packet of letters into the record.

And without objection, we will do so.

There are no more questions from the panel, but members may be able to submit written and follow-up questions. I think Senator Gillibrand said she had a couple that she was going to submit. They can do that by 5:00 p.m. today. We would ask that you try to respond by noon on Friday, February 1st, so we can

move ahead with your nomination.

I want to thank you for your time, your testimony. Thanks to Secretary Mineta, you stuck through the whole thing. Don't you think she did a marvelous job?

Mr. Mineta. Absolutely.

Senator Barrasso. And on that, this hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]