

Table of Contents

U.S. Senate	Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020
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 R. CARPER, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE	7
JASON GRUMET, PRESIDENT, BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER	16
ROBERT LANHAM, JR., PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA BOARD 2020, AND PRESIDENT, WILLIAMS BROTHERS CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.	24
CHRISTY GOLDFUSS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS	30

BETTER, FASTER, CHEAPER, SMARTER, AND STRONGER: INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO DRIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND
RESILIENCY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2020

United States Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m. in room 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable John Barrasso [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso, Carper, Capito, Rounds, Boozman, Cardin, Whitehouse, Booker.

Senator Barrasso. I would ask now that the witnesses for today's hearing please come forward.

Good morning. I call this hearing to order.

Investing in America's infrastructure is critical; it is critical as our economy recovers from the coronavirus pandemic. Last month, we held a hearing on how rebuilding our highways and bridges will create jobs, will reduce the cost of goods and services, and will drive our Nation's economic recovery. Today, we are going to examine how America's Transportation Infrastructure Act will help build roads and bridges faster, better, cheaper, smarter, and stronger.

Three months from today, the surface transportation authorization will expire. This cannot be allowed to happen, especially during this pandemic-caused economic downturn. To make matters worse, the Highway Trust Fund is rapidly approaching insolvency.

Prior to the pandemic, the Congressional Budget Office projected that the Highway Trust Fund would run out of money in mid-2021. Now, with Americans driving less, the Highway Trust Fund will reach insolvency far sooner than first predicted. The time for Congress to pass meaningful, bipartisan infrastructure legislation is now.

Last year, this committee approved historic and bipartisan highway infrastructure legislation. We worked together across

the aisle to pass a bipartisan bill that greenlights broad, widely supported ideas. Democrats in the House, on the other hand, put up a partisan stop sign. The House Democrats' transportation bill stands in sharp contrast to our own. House Democrats cut their Republican counterparts out of the process and they wrote a completely partisan bill. That is why, after a 36-hour markup, it received no Republican votes in committee.

By comparison, this committee unanimously passed our highway bill in less than an hour. The House Democrats' partisan bill is a road to nowhere. Instead, Congress should pass the Senate's bipartisan legislation and send it to President Trump's desk for his signature.

America's Transportation Infrastructure Act will provide record levels of investment: \$287 billion dollars will be available over five years to fix our roads and bridges, to create jobs, and to boost our economy. The legislation increases funding for all States and tribes, it cuts red tape, and it protects the environment. It will also increase needed certainty for States and communities to plan, to permit, and to build infrastructure projects.

Given the unprecedented economic damage inflicted by the coronavirus pandemic, we must assure infrastructure projects are not needlessly delayed. The environmental review process is important and necessary. It can also cause unnecessary delays.

Delays increase costs, limit private investment, and they hurt the American worker.

America's Transportation Infrastructure Act will speed up project delivery by cutting red tape and simplifying agency reviews. Reducing the time it takes to get environmental permits is essential for building new highways and repairing existing ones. To improve the permitting process, the bill increases predictability, accountability, transparency, and flexibility.

From 2010 to 2017, the Federal Highway Administration completed environmental impact statements for 114 highway projects. On average, it took almost seven years to complete each one of those environmental reviews. America's Transportation Infrastructure Act sets a goal to complete the process in just two years. The bill also requires federal agencies to establish a unified schedule and empowers the project's lead agency to coordinate the entire permitting process. These are key elements of the 'One Federal Decision' policy.

The legislation will also ensure America's infrastructure is more resilient. Our roads and bridges must be strong enough to handle extreme weather events like hurricanes and floods. At the same time, our highways must withstand natural disasters such as wildfires, earthquakes, and rockslides.

America's Transportation Infrastructure Act provides nearly \$5 billion to help protect our roads and bridges from natural disasters and extreme weather events. More durable, longer lasting roads are safer, they last longer, of course, and are more efficient for everyone.

Passing America's Transportation Infrastructure Act into law is critical for our Nation's economic recovery. It will ensure better, faster, cheaper, smarter, and stronger projects.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on this important topic.

Now, I would like to turn to Ranking Member Carper for his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Senator Barrasso follows:]

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

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I do want to welcome our witnesses. Thank you all for joining us live and in person this morning. We do a lot virtually around here; I am sure you do where you live and work as well. It is nice to see you here, and thank you for your work and for your presence and your testimony.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this important hearing today. I want to say a special thanks to all of our members of this committee, Democrat and Republican, and one Independent, to thank them and their staffs for helping us produce a bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bill a year ago that we reported unanimously out of this committee.

Let me begin by noting that as we meet here today, the House is debating a broad infrastructure bill of their own that includes not just surface transportation bills, but drinking water infrastructure, energy infrastructure and broadband. Those are very important subjects.

The cornerstone of their bill, however, is the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's surface transportation legislation. With the anticipated adoption of that bill, perhaps even later today, the House is poised to move closer to joining us in reauthorizing our Nation's surface

transportation programs, which are set to expire this fall. I am sure we all welcome their progress. Although we may disagree on some of the particulars there, I am sure we all welcome their progress.

Now, with the surface transportation reauthorization bill moving in the House, it is time for the Senate Banking Committee and the Senate Commerce Committees to develop their own bipartisan titles so that a truly robust surface transportation reauthorization bill can come to the Senate Floor in the months ahead. The American people are counting on us to get this done. Let's not let them down.

Every member of our committee knows that America's transportation infrastructure is essential to our economy, to our society and, if truth be known, to our way of life. The more than four million miles of roadway and 600,000 bridges in this Country are essential not just in connecting us to commerce and to services, but more importantly, connecting us to one another. Unfortunately, across our Country, many of those same roads, highways and bridges are in desperate need of repair.

Whether you happen to be driving an 18-wheeler truck hundreds of miles a day on interstates across the heartland, or hitting pot holes on your way to work or the grocery store, or to drop off the kids, just about every driver in America will agree that our surface transportation infrastructure needs work,

a lot of it. While some roads simply need repairs or repaving, others need to be rebuilt or completely redesigned. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, approximately 20 percent of our federal-aid highways are in poor condition, 20 percent, as are some 46,000 bridges.

For decades, we have invested in surface transportation infrastructure as a country oftentimes without making meaningful progress toward improving safety, reducing harmful emissions, and enhancing resilience. Now, we face a growing climate crisis that will only make those challenges even more daunting.

Last week, some of the coldest places on Earth experienced an historical heat wave. I don't know if my colleagues got to see the news, but temperatures exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the Arctic Circle for the first time in recorded history. Think about that, 100 degrees. Earlier this year, on the other side of the planet in Antarctica, my wife and some of her girlfriends from their days at Dupont were down in Antarctica. Shortly after they left, the temperatures there reached 70 degrees Fahrenheit, 70 degrees Fahrenheit, another record.

With historic heat waves reaching the coldest corners of our planet, 2020 is on course to be the hottest year in recorded history. Moreover, we are being told that the forecast for this year's hurricane season may well set new records, too, raising serious concerns all along the Atlantic Coast and throughout the

Gulf Coast.

Speaking of the Gulf of Mexico, one of our Republican colleagues from Louisiana volunteered to me last week that sea level rise continues to worsen in his State, too, where they are losing roughly a football field of land a day, a football field of land a day, to the sea. You will recall that a year ago, the target of Mother Nature's fury was the Midwest, where torrential rains and catastrophic flooding brought havoc to many farming communities, delaying planting for a month or more in some places.

Farther west, in places like California, Nevada, Oregon and Utah, communities are still reeling from last year's wildfires, some of which were bigger than my State. And now, they are preparing out there for another dangerously hot and dry summer season.

These extreme weather events are happening more frequently, pushing the National Flood Insurance Program ever further into the red and damaging our infrastructure to the tune of hundreds of billions, not millions, billions, of dollars each year. As global temperatures continue to warm, ice caps melt and sea levels rise, scientists tell us that the record-breaking heatwaves, devastating hurricanes, catastrophic floods, and drought-fueled wildfires we are already witnessing throughout the world aren't likely to get better. If we don't get on the

stick, as my grandfather used to say, they are likely to get worse.

Now, having said that, I understand that some of our colleagues are interested in talking about the importance of streamlining today, and it is important to do that. As we pivot to streamlining, however, let me ask that we keep in mind that only about 1 percent of federal highway projects require the most complicated type of federal environmental review. That means 99 percent don't.

When Chairman Barrasso and I, with the help of our staffs, first began our work on this legislation before us, America's Transportation Infrastructure Act, nearly two years ago, we learned that Congress has passed more than 60 streamlining provisions all told in the last four transportation bills, even though, I am told, the most detailed environmental reviews are needed for about only 1 percent of federal projects. I believed then and I still believe now that we need to do more than just stack more streamlining provisions on top of existing ones. We ought to be able to move streamlining provisions. We also need to ensure that the ones we have adopted are being implemented.

In ATIA, we address streamlining needs in part by focusing on how to make existing processes work better. In doing so, we demonstrate that it is possible to facilitate important projects without forgoing environmental protection. That is a win for

all of us who use America's roads, highways, and bridges, and it is a win for our planet. Where I come from, we call that a win-win situation. We could all use a few more of those.

Some of our colleagues know that I am fond of quoting Albert Einstein, who once said famously, "In adversity lies opportunity." God knows we face plenty of adversity these days in our Country and on our planet, pandemics, tens of millions of Americans out of work, and the list goes on and on.

Having said that, there is opportunity here if we look for it and seize the day. That is what our committee did last summer under the leadership of our chairman John Barrasso. We led by our example. We didn't wait until the last minute. We got out of the starting gate early. A year ago, we unanimously approved ATIA, our bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bill that would make an historic \$287 billion investment in our Nation's roads, highways, and bridges. We then said to our sister committees, the Banking Committee, our friends on the Commerce Committee and those on the Finance Committee, including me, we are doing our job on EPW, it is time for you on these other three committees to do your jobs.

Is ATIA perfect? No. No bill that I have ever helped write has been perfect, but this is legislation that we can be proud of, even as we work to make it better in the days ahead. Coming from the lowest lying State in the Union, I am especially

proud and grateful that our bill includes the first-ever climate title in a transportation bill in the history of the Congress, investing some \$10 billion over the next five years directly in programs and policies that will combat climate change by reducing emissions and improving the resiliency of our transportation networks and infrastructure.

ATIA invests nearly \$5 billion over five years in a new resilience formula program available to all States, as well as a competitive resilience grant program. These new PROTECT grants would support projects across America that reinforce, upgrade, or realign existing transportation infrastructure to better withstand extreme weather events and other effects of climate change.

ATIA also harnesses the power of Mother Nature by establishing new eligibilities for natural infrastructure, like the marshes and wetlands that protect our roads and bridges from storm surges, in the National Highway Performance Program and the Emergency Relief program.

Mr. Chairman, let me close with this. A lot has changed in the world since we first reported our surface transportation reauthorization legislation nearly a year ago. It seems like a decade ago. The coronavirus pandemic has radically changed our lives and, tragically, taken nearly 130,000 American lives.

Just as all of us have been compelled to adjust and adapt

to a new normal in our everyday lives over the last several months, we as a nation need to face the facts of the climate crisis. With our bill, we are beginning to do so. We need to keep it up and, while doing so, we need to build and rebuild a surface transportation infrastructure of roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems that is, once again, the envy of the world.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to our conversation this morning and to hearing from our witnesses, and to the work ahead of us to make America's infrastructure better, smarter and, truly, stronger.

Thank you very, very much.

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much, Senator Carper. We appreciate it.

We are joined by three witnesses today that we are delighted to welcome to the committee. We have Mr. Jason Grumet, who is the President of the Bipartisan Policy Center. We have Mr. Bob Lanham, who is the President of the Associated General Contractors of America. And we have Ms. Christy Goldfuss, who is the Senior Vice President, Energy and Environment Policy, of the Center for American Progress.

Welcome to all three of you. I want to remind you that your full written testimony will be made a part of the official record today. So we ask you to please try to keep your statement to five minutes, so that we may have some time for questions. I look forward to hearing testimony from all three of you. If we may start with Mr. Grumet.

STATEMENT OF JASON GRUMET, PRESIDENT, BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

Mr. Grumet. Thank you, Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and the committee, for the hard work, and particularly for the very collaborative process you have undertaken in developing the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act.

I am pleased to be here this morning to share the Bipartisan Policy Center's strong support for this actionable, bipartisan effort that will spur economic recovery, strengthen surface transportation, and create a real model of bipartisan cooperation that I believe offers a real solution to the climate crisis.

I should apologize to your staff for the undue length of our written testimony, but want you to understand this as an expression our exuberance for being involved in a process that is actually trying to put legislation on the desk of the President of the United States. All too often, we find the legislative process being used to score political points and come up with messaging bills. I think the time is now actually to act, and I commend the committee for the spirit of this legislative approach.

I will try to summarize my testimony by focusing on a few of the highlights of the bill, and then also really explain why we believe the combined focus on an official regulatory approval process, emissions mitigation and resilience, represent the

essential ingredients of a serious bipartisan response to climate change.

There are three aspects of the legislation I would like to call out. The first is the effort to unleash \$300 billion of critical economic activity at a moment when we have millions of Americans looking for work, and State and local budgets in disarray. I also want to acknowledge the efforts to promote the significant investment in clean technologies, and emissions reductions, and in resilience against climate-driven risk. And finally, embrace the common-sense permitting reforms that focus on coordination and efficiency while sustaining the core values and protections of the environmental review process.

As a democracy that respects private ownership and local governance, I am proud that American citizens play a role in decisions that affect their families and communities. I think we have to resist the infrastructure envy and anecdotes about how quickly totalitarian regimes can build airports.

We also have to avoid an exaggerated focus on horror stories, as I think Senator Carper indicated. The vast majority of projects do move forward quickly. But the truth is that our record on infrastructure is mixed. While most projects do move forward, we could do much better to create predictability, transparency, and accountability.

I also think we have to contend with the likelihood that

the long timeframes in our permitting process result in political risks to investments that are causally-related to the private sector's vast under-investments in critical infrastructure. So I commend the committee for efforts to create a more efficient, timely and predictable process.

I think the improvements that you are suggesting in permitting fall into three basic categories. You create a presumption of timeliness to encourage agencies to complete their environmental reviews within an average of two years, a presumption of coordination by codifying the bipartisan components of the One Federal Decision, and require agencies to work together in applying categorical exclusions, and a presumption of accountability by requiring a new performance system for tracking major projects.

I would like to now turn to the broader implications for the energy and climate debate. The hearing is titled Better, Faster, Cheaper, Smarter and Stronger. Mr. Chairman, I think you have buried the lead by leaving out cleaner. The future of our environment and our economy demands a new coalition committed to building fast and building clean. While conservation and energy efficiency are essential components of an effective strategy, the solution to climate change and to global competition depend on vast and urgent efforts to develop, finance, permit, site, and construct new technologies on a scale

beyond what we have ever contemplated.

The Bipartisan Policy Center is increasingly concerned that the United States will in fact succeed in inventing new, low-cost, competitive technologies for decarbonization but fail to deploy these systems in time to avoid and manage the worst effects of climate change.

Members of this committee appreciate far better than most what it will take to achieve net zero emissions across our economy. We need vast increases in solar and wind power, supported by new transmission and massive battery storage facilities, thousands of miles of new pipelines to move CO2 from power generation to manufacturing, to permanent underground sequestration reservoirs. We need electric vehicle and hydrogen refueling infrastructure, new fleets of advanced nuclear reactors, deep bore geothermal, advanced hydropower, new facilities to capture carbon from the air.

With continued leadership from many of you on this committee on efforts like the USE IT Act, and the Nuclear Energy Leadership Act, and the efforts of your colleagues in the Energy Committee on the Energy Innovation Act, I am actually optimistic that the United States will invent low-carbon cost effective solutions. It would be beyond tragic to excel at technology but fail at bureaucracy.

To focus on transportation, the provisions in this Act spur

forward-looking infrastructure investments that can improve the siting process much more broadly than just the transportation sector. I would like to just note three enhancements that I think are consistent with the spirit of this legislation that I encourage you to consider.

The first is to reauthorize FAST-41. This is legislation that has had bipartisan support and it codifies the same basic ideas in this package but applies them to a broader suite of technologies.

Second, I would urge you to focus on life cycle cost analysis. This must become the norm. Our history of building cheap and passing along the buck was never a good idea. Based on the extreme weather, it is revealing a tragic consequence. We are never going to get ahead of resilience if we don't start to think about full cost accounting.

Finally, I think our biggest challenge is our Federal Republic. I believe the national imperative to de-carbonize our economy while increasing global competitiveness will require much greater federal authority to advance critical projects despite local opposition. And I believe that we have to revisit ideas like the Critical Corridors Section of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which a number of you were a party to.

However, I also believe that certain place-based assessments must be strengthened in order to advance an enduring

and equitable climate solution. There is clear evidence that communities of color have borne a disproportionate burden of environmental harm from past energy and infrastructure siting. This system must not be brushed aside, nor repeated.

Many of these nuclear facilities will create jobs, grow the tax base, and improve the quality of life in surrounding communities. But in some cases, national and global benefits may come at a cost to local communities. These costs must be shared equitably.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, for too long we have allowed our economic future to be held captive to magical thinking across the political spectrum. In this caricature of extreme perspectives, some have ignored or otherwise sought to delegitimize the imperative of climate action. Others have embraced the un-serious view that a solution can be achieved quickly by transitioning to a sole reliance on renewed resources without considering the economic, land use, and reliability concerns, or resolving the citing challenges that have plagued conventional energy projects.

Yet, these extremes have produced only paralysis and acrimony, as both sides focus on the irresponsible positions of the other, rather than facing their own limitations or seeking common ground. Against this backdrop, passing this legislation would be the highest common denominator affirmation that we have

the political will and the capacity to rebuild our economy while meeting the climate challenge.

I thank you and your staff for your hard work and am eager to participate in the conversation. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Grumet follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much for your participation and your testimony. We are very, very grateful. And your suggestion to not bury the lead is a very good suggestion. Thank you.

Mr. Lanham?

STATEMENT OF ROBERT LANHAM, JR., PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA BOARD 2020, AND PRESIDENT, WILLIAMS BROTHERS CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

Mr. Lanham. Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, thank you for the invitation to testify today. My name is Bob Lanham. I am a highway and bridge contractor from Houston, Texas, and I have the pleasure of serving as the 2020 President of the Associated General Contractors of America.

AGC is a national organization representing 27,000 businesses involved in every aspect of construction activity in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. On behalf of AGC, the construction industry and this Nation, I want to thank this committee for its bipartisan work on the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act.

Our transportation infrastructure is not built by one contractor, nor should the laws governing it be developed by one political party. Bipartisan compromises enhances the likelihood of legislative success, and ensures that all these programs reflect the diverse needs of the States.

Before I talk about some of the important provisions in ATIA, I would like to first address two things. One, the immediate need of infusion of federal funding for State DOTs; and two, the need for an enactment of a robust multi-year

surface transportation bill. With regard to the immediate needs of the DOTs, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our economy, the American people and the construction industry, States' transportation revenues are expected to decline by 30 percent over the next 18 months. This has caused many DOTs to delay letting new projects. Construction businesses, just like any other business, cannot survive many, many months without work.

In response, AGC is urging the Congress to provide an immediate infusion of \$49.95 billion in federal funding to support the State DOT funding shortfalls. I applaud Senator Rounds for leading it, and many of you on this committee, for signing the bipartisan letter to the Senate leadership in support of this funding request.

With regard to a long-term bill, the pandemic has clearly reminded us that a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system is vital to any national emergency response. Our system facilitates economic growth, and improves the quality of life of all Americans. The enactment of a long-term surface transportation bill, such as ATIA, will provide certainty needed by the States' DOTs to plan and carry out critical infrastructure investments. It will also provide a significant economic boost to our Nation at a time when it is sorely needed.

With regard to some of the other provisions in ATIA, it is

not just enough to provide robust investment levels. The bill has other provisions in it that add extreme value. One, the improvement of the environmental review and permitting process, while all along protecting the environment. Finally, the building of resilient infrastructure.

Over the years, the Congress has enacted laws that have tried to assure a balance between environmental, economic, and health concerns. However, in this complicated operation and complex network of these laws and the intersection of all these requirements, sometimes those were overseen and the environmental review process was delay.

AGC is pleased that ATIA has incorporated the provisions to improve the process. The most significant is simply the codification of Executive Order 13807, which institutes the One Federal Decision. This provision calls for a federal authorization and reviews to rely on a single environmental document, establishes a two-year goal for the completion of a review of a major project, and a 90-day timeline related to any authorization decisions to be issued after a record of decision.

It also improves transparency through performance accountability. It works like a business. Tracking system for the review and the permitting process itself, and in that allows for a monitoring and reporting of how the system is working.

Other important provisions include but are not limited to

establishing deadlines for a federal agency to review and respond to categorical exclusion projects, requires certain reports that, especially one that details best practices and potential changes to internal procedures at USDOT to expedite the review process.

In recent years, our Nation has experienced significant natural disasters. I partially experienced Harvey in Houston, and the flooding associated. Our system is vital to our ability to respond to and recover from these disasters. However, we have all seen the pictures in the news of the roads that are submerged or bridges that are crumbling.

AGC appreciates that ATIA includes provisions to improve the resilience of the transportation system. Arguably the most important of these is the PROTECT grant program, funded at nearly \$1 billion per year. The diverse eligibilities of this program will help ensure that the different needs of the States can be addressed.

Chairman Barrasso, thank you for convening today's hearing. It is a golden opportunity for the Congress. At a time when it seems there is little that we can agree on, infrastructure might prove to be that missing link.

I thank the committee for its steadfast bipartisan efforts to improve our Nation's transportation infrastructure, and I look forward to answering any of your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lanham follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much for that very helpful testimony. We appreciate your being here today.

At this time I would like to turn to Ms. Christy Goldfuss, who is the Senior Vice President of Energy and Environment Policy at the Center for American Progress. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTY GOLDFUSS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

Ms. Goldfuss. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Good morning, Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper. Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important hearing. It is truly nice to be out of the house for the first time in three months and be here in person.

I am the Senior Vice President of Energy and Environment Policy at the Center for American Progress, and previously ran the White House Council on Environmental Quality during the Obama Administration.

Here is what I would like to tell the committee today. Infrastructure policy cannot be separated from its implications for climate change, land use, structural racism, and the health of our communities. The transportation sector is now the leading source of carbon pollution. The best time to incorporate the imperatives of climate change and climate justice into transportation policy were decades ago. But the second best time is now.

I congratulate the Environment and Public Works Committee for S. 2302, America's Transportation Infrastructure Act, which takes some important steps to grapple with these thorny and critical issues. The \$10 billion climate change subtitle, the first ever in a transportation bill, sets aside about 3.5

percent of highway funding to retrofit or relocate existing infrastructure to reward States that reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. This is a promising start, especially given the bipartisan support.

At the end of the day, the fact that there is a climate change subtitle in this bill will mean that there should never again be a transportation bill that fails to invest in climate mitigation and resilience. Following your lead, consider how the House's current infrastructure bill begins to incorporate climate policy into the core highway funding programs, in addition to creating new funding programs similar to ATIA, for adaptation and mitigation. This kind of bicameral interest in reform represents a critical recognition that infrastructure policy is climate policy.

However, the climate funding in this bill cannot be put to good use to build resilient, climate-ready infrastructure without proper planning, community engagement and public review of the anticipated results. As this committee is aware, this environmental review is the purview of the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, which you are all quite familiar with, and which is currently under significant and overreaching attack from the Trump Administration in the rewrite of the NEPA regulations.

NEPA is central, not antithetical, to the rapid permitting

and construction of resilient and equitable infrastructure projects. Such projects require hundreds of millions, often billions of taxpayer dollars. It does not make sense to leap before we look and build an expensive new bridge in a location, for example, that is going to be underwater in five years because of sea level rise and storm flooding. That common sense approach is why 80 percent of Americans support NEPA. They truly want both a clean environment and strong infrastructure, and don't want to sacrifice one for the other.

NEPA and the environmental review process also ensure that all communities, particularly Black communities, and other communities of color, have a voice in decisions that affect their neighborhoods and livelihoods. Without NEPA and with the changes that the Trump Administration is near to finalizing in the regulations, communities will be unable to push back on projects that may literally make it harder for them to breathe.

This is not an abstract concern. Just this week, the Rhodium Group released an analysis that found, on average, Black Americans are exposed to 46 percent more diesel particulate matter emissions and 22 percent more air toxic respiratory hazards than White Americans. Given dozens of actions by Congress over the past 20 years, we already have the necessary tools to ensure that NEPA's process is efficient, transparent, and successful.

But the Federal Government must use the authorities granted and invest in staff, basic tracking technology, and project management systems, not slash support, as this Administration has done. Specific recommendations for improving NEPA based on my experience at CEQ are included in my written testimony.

As this committee knows, infrastructure policy is climate policy. And climate justice is also racial justice. This bill is a first step toward both these goals. With investment, community input, and careful planning, we can truly form a more perfect union, one built around justice, opportunity, and hope.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you for having me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Goldfuss follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you for your very thoughtful testimony. We are glad to have all three of you here today.

I want to start with a question that actually goes to all three of you. I'm going to start with Mr. Lanham. America's Transportation Infrastructure Act requires, as we talked about, environmental reviews for major highway projects to be completed in a timely and predictable manner. The permitting reforms in this bill mirror the Administration's One Federal Decision policy.

We will start with you, Mr. Lanham. Will each of you please elaborate on how the bill's bipartisan permitting reforms will help deliver these projects faster, better, cheaper, and cleaner, while not sacrificing environmental safeguards?

Mr. Lanham. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As we read it, absolutely nothing has changed in what agencies review and what standards need to be -- there has not been a change in any of the environmental criteria by which it is just requirement that each must run concurrently and efficiently as they move through the process. So there has been no change.

The other benefit of that is it collapses the time. Instead of being sequential, it is concurrent review and evaluation of a project. That collapses schedule, much in the same way that we as builders collapse schedule looking at

concurrent construction activity to moving.

The other thing I think often goes overlooked, Mr. Chairman, is that the program itself showing relevance to public need, when a process is delayed from concept to delivery, when you hear at a public hearing, I am not worried about it, my grandchildren will. Then that project, the entire program loses relevance to immediate public need. If we are talking about resilience and those other issues that are immediate concern, we need a program that moves forward, and that can address those.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you. Ms. Goldfuss?

Ms. Goldfuss. One Federal Decision is not a problem in the way it is written. It is how it is administered. The whole orientation of One Federal Decision is to make clear that the client of the Federal Government is the project proponent. That is just one client. The other client that is very important is the American public.

So from my time at CEQ, I was very much in favor of FAST-41 and the permitting counsel that we have. Because I do think having guidelines, transparency, and really making sure that we are building off the data that each agency has is important. And you need transparency and predictability to move forward and build the Country the way we need to build it.

The problem is, you have to allow for the community

engagement. That is a key part and a key constituency that is not recognized in the One Federal Decision.

So I don't in and of itself have an issue, it is just with how it is implemented, to make sure that we are continuing to keep community voices as part of that process, and as part of the timeline and the transparency that a project proponent needs. Because if you don't engage the community, you run into all these problems on the back end. And that actually, at the end of the day, slows down the process.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you. Mr. Grumet?

Mr. Grumet. I think I will just add that we all agree that you have to have a good process and good execution. I think the premise of NEPA requires focus and coordination.

The one thing that Congress really didn't imagine when NEPA was first put in place was the variety of different federal agencies, all who have different opinions, different views, and different processes. So I think the most important aspect of One Federal Decision is that we have to have one Federal Government that is actually working at the same purpose.

I think you can summarize NEPA as a tale of two bridges. We had the Tappan Zee Bridge, the Administration made it a priority, the community focused on it, and within 11 months, a \$3.9 billion project EIS was completed and that was an incredible success story. Fifty miles downriver, you had the

Bayonne Bridge. Just wanted to raise the bridge, same footprint. It took five years to get a federal decision that there was no significant impact. Same process.

So I think Ms. Goldfuss is right; it is about execution. I think the permit provisions in this bill set the right expectations for the Country.

Senator Barrasso. Hurricane season began June 1st, puts much of the East and Gulf Coast on warning into the fall. June through early July is peak fire season across the West. In my home State of Wyoming, we can experience natural disasters, wildfires, as well as severe flooding, rockslides. So the toll that these natural disasters take on our Nation's roads and bridges is significant.

Let me start with you, Mr. Grumet. What are the benefits that States will see from investing in building more resilient roads and bridges as this bill recommends?

Mr. Grumet. Mr. Chairman, I think it is an incredible insight, and very important to the Nation to realize that in 2019, it was the fifth year in a row that we had over \$10 billion natural disasters. The extreme weather, being driven by climate change, and the cost of extreme weather being driven by our economic development, are only going to get worse. We just have to get ahead of it.

So I think as was indicated, the focus on resilience in

this title is essential. It has been determined that every dollar invested by FEMA or HUD in resilience brings back \$6 in saved costs. I also think it is really essential that we think broadly about how we are going to pay for our disaster resilience going forward. I think this committee can do a lot of good if we brought disaster relief on budget, so that we actually thought about the full costs of our natural disasters and made the right kind of investments in resilience.

Senator Barrasso. Ms. Goldfuss, I am out of time, so if you could briefly respond, because as you talked about, the best time to do something was 20 years ago, the second best time is today. I heard the same about planting a tree, best time to plant a tree 20 years ago, second best time is today. What are your thoughts on the resilience issue, and the benefits?

Ms. Goldfuss. I think it is critical, as this committee has done, to really focus on the States making this decision as well, because every State is different. The impacts of extreme weather are really regional and depend on what the conditions are in that State.

So this is really the step that needs to become the norm in the future, as we experience more and more extreme weather. We have the tools, we have the information to plan for this. It is irresponsible to not spend the taxpayer dollars in a way that accounts for that.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you. Senator Carper?

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I just sat here listening to our witnesses, Mr. Chairman, and colleagues. We usually have very, very well-spoken witnesses, thought-provoking testimony, and excellent responses. But I think today it is especially so.

I just wonder, have any of you been on a debate team? Seriously, a debate team, in college? Mr. Grumet, I see you raised your hand. Where did you go to school?

Mr. Grumet. I was at Brown University. I actually had the privilege of debating with Senator Coons.

Senator Carper. No kidding.

Mr. Grumet. He was even good back then.

Senator Carper. He still talks about that.

Anybody else? Maybe anybody else in the room? Maybe we will get Johns Hopkins? Somebody in this room that you might have come across, come up against, like Mary Frances Repko?

Mr. Grumet. Mary Frances -- you are setting me up, Senator. Yes, Mary Frances was a terror at the lectern.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. I don't win many arguments with her, either.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. Ms. Goldfuss, were you really?

Ms. Goldfuss. Yes, and I also went to Brown University.

Mr. Grumet. We didn't get out much, so the corona crisis actually brings us back to our college experiences of basically being by ourselves in our dorms reading our debate text.

[Laughter.]

Ms. Goldfuss. Ranking Member Carper, you have to ask who won the debate.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. You can respond for the record.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. This question is for all of you, we will start with Mr. Lanham, then Jason and then Christy Goldfuss.

Our ATIA bill includes the very first ever climate title in a highway bill. As some of you have noted, it makes \$10 billion of investments in resilience of our infrastructure, recharging and refueling stations to support the use of clean vehicles and planning to reduce emissions. We added these provisions because our committee members on both sides of the aisle saw a need for a new program to help States respond to extreme weather that they are regularly facing.

The House today is considering legislation that would make additional investments in similar programs, although some are structured differently than our own. A question for each of you: What are the benefits of addressing climate risks to our

transportation systems in the surface transportation reauthorization? And conversely, what are the risks to safety and the economy of failing to address the current and future impact of climate change on our roads, highways, bridges, and other transportation systems? Mr. Lanham, would you lead us off, please?

Mr. Lanham. Thank you, Ranking Member Carper. I think that the need to address climate change is now rather than later. We talk about the severe weather, that plays right into the need to address it.

Senator Carper. Are you from Houston?

Mr. Lanham. I am.

Senator Carper. I was there, I was there right on the heels of Hurricane Harvey.

Mr. Lanham. Yes, you talk about building, mitigating infrastructure, we had three feet of water over everything. It was kind of hard to go anywhere. The States need to be able to adapt and use the grant program under your ATIA in a flexible manner to approach it. But I think this all plays to the immediate need for resilience in our infrastructure.

But how it gets defined, leaving this broad enough so each one, is it seismic retrofit out west, or is it flood evacuation? We can't lift Houston three feet if that much water falls. But we can see to the safe evacuation of all because we have

resilient infrastructure in place that will allow for safe evacuation of people in the event of a hurricane that strikes the Gulf Coast.

I think you have set up that mechanism of which each of the States can address that to their own devices, their own peculiar and unique needs. But it is something that needs to be pushed now.

Senator Carper. Thank you so much. Mr. Grumet, same question, and I'll ask you to try to be brief.

Mr. Grumet. I will try to be brief, and it will be difficult, because this is a passion of mine, Senator.

I believe that the effort to integrate climate concerns and the facilitation of building new infrastructure is a real inflection point that has truly the potential to shift the climate debate. We have been in a terribly stalemated position in which advocates for climate change have found themselves opposing modernity, and opposing new infrastructure. When you look at the scale of the challenge, we have to build things many, many times faster, many, many times larger, many, many times bigger than we ever have before in human history. We want to have to do all kinds of incredible, incredible projects.

And our regulatory structure right now does not tolerate success. So rather than focusing on single projects and single pipelines and fighting about doing brown things slow, we have to

have a new coalition that comes together to build the future fast. I think that the climate advocacy community, if it seems the Congress moving toward solutions on climate change, will get past that kind of resistance to building things and actually recognize that the thing that we need more than anything to solve the climate challenge is to figure out how to modernize and facilitate faster construction of new, modern infrastructure.

Senator Carper. Thank you. Ms. Goldfuss, please, same question.

Ms. Goldfuss. Just quickly, we have seen with coronavirus that our economic system is not immune to external shocks. And climate is going to be a huge external shock, the cost of bridges, the cost of roads, mortgages when communities are underwater and the homes aren't worth as much as they were before. This is something we have to plan for, and in building resilience into our infrastructure, we are planning to be stronger in the future.

I completely agree that the climate community has come around to the fact that infrastructure policy is climate policy, and that we must build bigger, stronger, and faster. But we have to have the tools in place, and we have to make sure that the processes work.

So resilience being baked into the equation from the

beginning is essential to make sure that we have sound infrastructure and that also we protect our economy and protect communities.

Senator Carper. Thanks. Mr. Chairman, we might want to invite more debate team members to come before us. These folks are really exceptional. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. And we don't need to limit it to Brown University, either.

Senator Whitehouse. I think we should.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. What has Brown done for you lately?

[Laughter.]

Senator Barrasso. Senator Whitehouse may have a specific recommendation regarding the best of Brown.

Senator Whitehouse. We Rhode Islanders are very proud of Brown.

Senator Barrasso. Senator Capito.

Senator Capito. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our panel. What a difference a year has made. We know 11 months ago we approved ATIA, and in a unanimous, bipartisan fashion it came through our subcommittee. We worked with Senator Cardin. I appreciate the Chairman and Ranking Member kind of pulling it over the finish line. I think today it is now more deserving than ever that we take it, not just

from the full committee, but up to the full Senate and enact it into law.

I think COVID-19 has hammered our national economy. All three of you talked about that. It has really carried cost. Installing the investments, for example, in my State of West Virginia, driving on deficient roads costs West Virginia drivers \$366 million per year, a hidden expense of about \$754 per person, due to vehicle wear, depreciation, extra fuel. We do have some difficult terrain at times to get around. But it can also contribute to fatalities and injuries. And that costs money and obviously lives, which is very difficult.

I think that for places like West Virginia, I am just going to mention some that I think will be particularly important in this bill. The Nitro-St. Albans Bridge, which is I-64 outside of Charleston, and completing Corridor H, which is the last really planned part of the Appalachian Development Highway System, which goes through the center of our State, which has been being built for decades. We want to see that complete.

So I was proud to work with the regulatory streamlining provisions that are in here. Getting the permitting is absolutely critical. Mr. Lanham, I have been on transportation for many years. Obviously here, and then over in the House, I was on the House Transportation Committee. We have had a lot of stops and starts over the years, where we have had three-month

extensions, six-month extensions, not quite as long as even a year. I know you have been in business for a while, and I am sure your company has been held hostage by the stops and starts and the sputtering of those acts as we did that over the last several years.

What kind of impact does that have on a company like yours, on your ability to get these large projects done, if we are only extending for six months, or extending for three months? Could you make a comment on that?

Mr. Lanham. Senator, it is devastating to the program. One, because almost all these significant projects are multi-year projects. So unless there is funding certainty, according to federal rules, the transportation plan is fiscally constrained. So unless they have the funding in place, those significant projects fall off the immediate plan. Or they trade funding for other essential projects and bundle it into the one.

But the overall system loses. The effect to businesses like ours is we lose opportunity. Then when there is reduced opportunity, we are laying people off.

Senator Capito. Right. That is what I was going to ask.

Mr. Lanham. In 2008, we laid off 30 percent of the company.

Senator Capito. In 2008?

Mr. Lanham. Yes, ma'am.

Senator Capito. Are you back up, or were you back up?

Mr. Lanham. We are getting close, but it took a decade.

Senator Capito. And those are jobs that are good-paying jobs, they sustain a lot of families in Texas, and certainly across the Country.

I am interested to know, too, during the COVID experience that you had, did you have to furlough some of your employees?

Mr. Lanham. Senator, no. We were blessed in our jurisdiction to be deemed an essential and critical activity. We capitalized on that. Now, we did operate safely, and instituted all the protocols in the workplace deemed appropriate and recommended. And we were able to advance projects and advance the schedule on projects because of the shutdown and the reduced traffic demand. Because we are strictly a road and bridge builder. So the reduced amount of cars, we advanced projects two and three months in the schedule because of that.

Senator Capito. I guess there is some good news that happened during this time.

I was interested to hear, Mr. Grumet, you mentioned pipelines. In my State, we have two major pipelines that have been stalled in the courts for years. I think it is unreasonable to think that to get to the environmental goals of some of the community who think they are all of a sudden going to be accepting of pipelines is because they fight them every

step of the way. Even though they have been lawfully, the one just went to the Supreme Court, on the permitting process. I am very pleased that the NDAA includes a bill that Senator Whitehouse have worked on together, from both sides of the aisle, it is called the USE IT Act. What it does it works with the creation of pipelines to carry that CO2 to other energy producing sites. Hopefully, that will have some impact.

But we all have to get, if we are going to modernize and build and use our own natural resources, this pipeline stalling and using legal tactics to really off the projects is deeply troubling to me and my region of the Country. Certainly, it has to be troubling to the Northeast, where our resource aren't able to help those folks up there have more affordable energy costs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you.

Senator Cardin.

Senator Cardin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank all the panelists. I am sorry to do this through the internet, and not be there in person to join you. But let me thank you all.

I just really want to underscore first the points that have been made by my colleagues. Senator Capito and I have worked very closely together in regard to infrastructure. I am very proud that we are able to do that in a bipartisan manner to

advance infrastructure legislation. We have done that certainly on the surface transportation. We have also done it in the Water Resources Development Act.

But I think we all understand how important the COVID-19 was for us to move forward with infrastructure in this Country. We are still in triage, so we are still dealing directly with the pandemic, dealing directly with the immediate economic impact. But we also need to recognize that when we come out of COVID-19, there is going to be a need for us to create jobs. Because many of the jobs that were here before COVID-19 are going to be lost, and we need to create jobs.

Investing in infrastructure helps us create jobs. And that is one of the real pluses here. We need to have a chapter of this year pass that puts us on the growth for infrastructure improvement. At the end of the day, when we do that, we not only create jobs, we have a better community for the people to live in.

But here is the key of the Environment and Public Works Committee. This is really what I want to emphasize, because I know we are having discussions with how we deal with resiliency, how we deal with a balanced program, how do we deal with issues such as transportation alternative programs. And there are different views in our committee on that. And that is understandable. But we have been able to come together with a

bipartisan product because we have listened to each other.

So yes, we need to build roads, and build bridges. I can give you two in Maryland that need to be replaced, the Johnson Bridge, the Nice Bridge, we need to make sure we do that. But we also have to invest in maintenance and maintain our current infrastructure. We have to invest in transit. In Maryland, the Purple Line is now under construction. The Purple Line is critically important for the traffic jams that we have in the Washington, D.C. area.

So we need to invest both in roads and bridges, but also in transit. Yes, we need a very strong, robust federal partnership, but that can't be dominant from the point of view of local decision-making. But that is why the Transportation Alternative Program is a critically-important part of our Surface Transportation Act.

On bipartisan efforts, I was on the phone earlier this week with our tourism industry. Obviously, it has very much been impacted by COVID-19. But they stressed to me the importance of TAP funding in order to deal with local priorities that can help their local economy and a better quality of life for the community that they serve.

So we have to be mindful of that. We also need to have opportunities where it is appropriate for public-private partnership. These are all issues that we want to deal with.

But the issue that, I just heard the last discussion with Senator Carper, dealing with resiliency, dealing with adaptation, dealing with smart transportation alternatives for our environment, such as electric vehicles. All that needs to be part of a balanced package so that we can continue to enjoy strong, bipartisan support for a robust infrastructure program that can pass the Congress and be signed into law.

I want to ask Ms. Goldfuss a question, sort of to tail onto something you have already talked about. And that is, there is always the issue of whether it is going to be good for the environment or good for our economy. I think that is a false choice, and I want to give you an opportunity to explain how when you invest in smart environmental policies, including transportation, it is actually a plus for our economy. I will give you an opportunity to expand on that if you might.

Ms. Goldfuss. Thank you, Senator. It is absolutely a false choice and the American public believes that. If you have good governance, if you have a Federal Government that knows how to move through a process, then you can have both good community engagement and understanding of the clean water impacts, the clean air impacts that are going to come from a project. You also will understand how to use the taxpayers' money in a sound way.

But that is the bare minimum that the American public

expects, that they are going to have clean air and clean water, and they are going to have safe bridges and safe roads. So to say that one has to be sacrificed for the other, or that one needs to be put aside for the other, is wrong on both sides. We have to do them both. That is the expectation. And with the processes and a strong government that understands how to move through the process and engage the public, you can have both.

Senator Cardin. Thank you very much. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you. Senator Boozman.

Senator Boozman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Carper, for holding this hearing, which is so important.

Mr. Lanham, as you know, America has a complex transportation system in dire need of repair. Without our Nation's rail network, barges, and trucks, much of our economy would become stagnant. We all know the importance of infrastructure investment, but if we rely too heavily on one mode of transportation, we do ourselves a disservice.

When commerce is strong, it is because of our intermodal system. I believe it is important that we invest in all of its components. Will you explain how water, road, and rail all rely on each other in a cost-effective and efficient commerce system? In fact, I think J.B. Hunt, their headquarters happens to be about five miles from where I live, I think they are one of the

biggest customers, maybe the biggest customer, of the railroads in the sense of the ability to use containers on trucks and rails and how that works together.

Mr. Lanham. Senator, we have a multi-faceted transportation network. It is probably a lot more complex than most people would even realize. When it comes to the movement of goods and services, rail, truck, rails out of ports to distribution centers onto trucks, just exactly as you described, Senator. With regard to much of our public infrastructure, it is also the conveyance of clean water in our water system.

So the importance of water right now, just to leave a point, is probably in, we refer to it back home in Texas, it is the new gold. Without water, we have no life. It is an essential element. It is part of our infrastructure network that we critically, critically need to take care of. It almost always occupies the public right of way that holds a road, almost always, somewhere.

So they are both so significant in purpose to when we talk about the quality of life of Americans in our infrastructure investment in the broadest sense, that is exactly what we are saying. Clean water, great transportation network, affordable goods and services to the average citizen. They can enjoy a quality of life that is unprecedented. We have grown to expect that in this Nation, and we need to continue that investment.

The challenges that we face are going to require unprecedented levels of investment.

Senator Boozman. As we hear of on-time delivery, things like that, the efficiency being so much greater than it used to be, what does that do for the environment?

Ms. Goldfuss. Yes, for the environment, it is important to have the information about where the projects are going to be. That allows you to understand what places should be protected, what places are necessary for clean water and clean air, and where we can actually have development that will be --

Senator Boozman. As far as just moving goods and services efficiently, where you are not running your truck or your, the inefficiencies on our waterways that occur sometimes, what does that do? All of this, again, working together, if we have system that works well, works efficiently, we will get rid of the areas of congestion that we have that, again, the on-time delivery system, which has been such, we have experienced some problems with that, with COVID. And we need to address that in the future.

But the system really does work very well. So getting these things right, besides being more efficient, most cost-effective and things like that, it is also very helpful for the environment, too.

Ms. Goldfuss. Certainly, the grant programs that you have

in this bill around ports and around diesel emissions reduction, anything that is more efficient reduces pollution. And that clearly reduces the impact to the environment. That is going to be essential for us to get those systems right, so that we are able to calibrate and make sure that we get those pollution reductions that we need.

Senator Boozman. Okay. Very good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much. Senator Whitehouse.

Senator Whitehouse. Thank you, Chairman.

First, let me welcome not one but two Brown University graduates. This is a big day for Rhode Island in the committee. And let me thank the Chairman for his concern for bipartisanship in infrastructure. I think that the Chairman's concern for bipartisanship in infrastructure could well be met by a conference between the Republican controlled Senate and the Democratic controlled House on an infrastructure bill if we can get it through the Senate Floor. So I am all for getting our bill through the Floor, and moving to conference.

My question for the witnesses has to do with geography. As you know, Rhode Island is a very coastal State. Thank you, Chairman, for mentioning hurricane season, something that does not hit landlocked Wyoming, but is a big deal for our coastal

States. I wanted to consider some of the things that we face on coasts. We oversee the Army Corps here. If you can believe it, there is a fund at the Army Corps called the Flood and Coastal Damage Reduction Fund. But if you look at how much of the money in it gets spent on coasts, in a good year, it is \$1 out of \$20. In a bad year, it is \$1 out of \$120.

So here is the Army Corps in theory having this fund for coasts, and ignoring coasts almost completely. We have just passed, with my support, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I am very sorry that we were not given the chance to add a bipartisan amendment that would have passed to increase funding for coasts. Because as we know, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is an upland and inland program. For every dollar that goes to inland States, only 40 cents per capita goes to a coastal State.

And in the coastal State, a lot of that 40 cents gets spent in Texas, in Pennsylvania and New York, on projects that are not coastal. So if you dig deeper, the bias in the Land and Water Conservation Fund against coasts is far worse than the two to one that you would think, just looking at the States themselves. Unfortunately, we weren't able to get anything for coasts until the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

On wind energy, we see in Wyoming and across the Country wind energy development happening very rapidly. In our coastal

States, with one exception, Rhode Island, we have offshore wind energy that is completely tangled up in siting, and we have a Trump Administration that seems only to care about environmental concerns when it can put them in front of offshore wind.

Because what offshore wind does is it displaces natural gas, and the people making these decisions come straight out of the fossil fuel industry.

So again, coasts are getting treated like second class citizens. Of course, we face things that other States don't, which is that our shores will actually disappear. We are actually going to lose parts of our State to sea level rise. I would like to put a recent article from the Providence Journal entitled *Rising Threat: a New Study Finds Thousands More Properties at Risk of Flooding*, into the record, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Without objection, so ordered.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Whitehouse. So my question to the panel is, should we not be focusing a lot in infrastructure on coasts? Not just the infrastructure that is at risk along the coast, but also the infrastructure that can support them as they take the beating that climate change has steering toward them right now.

Mr. Grumet. Senator, on behalf of the whole panel, I can assure you that we all believe that coastal preservation and resiliency is essential.

I want to pick up quickly two points you made. You mentioned offshore wind. I think offshore wind is the poster child for what we need to do to improve our permitting structure in the service of a sustainable climate. We have an incredible resource base in this Country for offshore wind. They are building offshore wind in Europe.

We do not have a technological challenge in this Country. We have a bureaucracy challenge in this Country. And if we can't figure out how to streamline and modernize our permitting system, we are going to lose that incredible opportunity, both economic opportunity and environmental opportunity.

I would step back and think more broadly about our disaster relief system in general. It tends to be kind of a mess. It tends to be a mess because we focus on disaster relief mostly in the middle of natural disasters, which of course the worst time to be thinking about forward-looking cost benefit analysis and

planning. It is the time you have to be thinking about people who are suffering immediate harm.

I think one of the problems, as I mentioned earlier, is we don't pay for our disasters. We are surprised year over year by very predictable events. We do emergency off-budget funding. And we try to raise money, but do not do the kind of rigorous planning that you are suggesting is necessary. If we had to grapple, if this Congress had to grapple with appropriating a trillion dollars of disaster relief funds, I think that would focus the mind in a different way. I think you would start to see a more equitable resource allocation that I think would probably address some of your concerns about coastal resources.

Senator Whitehouse. Mr. Chairman, I am over the time, so if I could ask the other two witnesses to respond as a question for the record, I would appreciate it. And if I may take a Rhode Island moment, I would like to say that there is a reason that the only offshore wind located anywhere in the United States is sited in Rhode Island. It is because Rhode Island figured out how to solve the siting problem. It really wasn't all that complicated. It begins with bringing everybody who has an interest in the location into the same room and sorting out the really obvious stupid questions, getting them off the table, getting them all sorted out before you begin the application process. And then you can use the process to sort through

further details.

Unfortunately, both the other companies that came into this process, including a Massachusetts company that should have known better, and the Administration, despite having that winning program right in front of them, that process right in front of them, decided to go completely different ways. As a result, we are still all totally bolloxed up. It is unfortunate. I hope that it is not also driven by a bad motive.

Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you so very much.

Senator Booker.

Senator Booker. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this hearing more than you know. It really is incredible for me to see the depth and level that we have of bipartisan spirit here. I heard a mention earlier of the Bayonne Bridge. I remember how frustrated I was to see a lot of the challenges we had in terms of getting a lot of the approvals necessary for projects that were utterly essential.

And so I just want to first and foremost ask the panel to reaffirm something that I really believe, that there is a large bipartisan sense of urgency in our Country to do what is necessary in this area. We are a nation that, this is not a left or a right issue, it is really about looking forward.

I know this was mentioned earlier, but if you could

specifically talk about this false dichotomy between affirming the environmental urgencies of this moment and making sure that we also get projects done in a timely way that honors the taxpayer dollar. I know that there are issues, the Eisenhower Highway Act would be about a trillion dollars worth of infrastructure investment if it was done today. But we wouldn't get as far today because of a lot of the challenges of approvals and the like.

But I really do believe that there is a resonance between streamlining and looking forward and getting major projects done. In New Jersey, there is an outrageous urgency, for example, to get the tunnels under the Hudson River, it has been at the heart, at the center of so much of my work, working across the aisle with then-Governor Chris Christie, and Democrat Chuck Schumer, to get us all on the same page, to create a streamlining process to get something done quickly that ultimately, when done, will have a massive environmental positive impact on our region.

So I just react against a lot of the gridlock and I am really working to smooth the sort of partisan fissures to get things done. I would just love to have the panel affirm that sense of urgency I feel, and that sense of conviction I feel that this is not a left or right issue. This is about moving our Nation forward, about seizing opportunities, about adding to

our economy, and ultimately, frankly, it is about making sure that we seize the chance to show that infrastructure and environment are not only resonant, but we cannot deal with our climate change challenges without forging ahead far more aggressively on the infrastructure projects, major infrastructure projects in our Country.

If the panel would comment on that, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Grumet. Senator, this is Jason Grumet. If I can just jump in. I think the urgency is there and the opportunity is there, but it is going to have to be seized by this committee. For too long, those who have been focused on infrastructure have been disinterested in climate change. And those who have been focused on climate change have been disinterested in infrastructure. We are all losing. We are not solving the climate problem, we are not increasing the strength of our economy, and we are not addressing our resiliency issues.

This committee has taken a very bold, and modest, but very bold step to reconcile those two different views. I think the combination of our economic crisis, which is not going to be V-shaped recovery, and the growing bipartisan appreciation that we have a climate crisis, which we can solve with a broad-based set of solutions, not just renewables and energy efficiency, but a broad-based, non-carbon set of solutions that include nuclear power and CCS and battery storage. I think we are at moment

now, at an inflection point, where we can get our arms around this whole debate and really push things forward.

But we are not on track toward success. We have made tremendous strides in renewable power. It is now about 10 percent of our overall on the grid. We now have to get from 10 percent to 80 or 90 percent in 30 years.

So I do not believe we will seize this moment unless this committee leads the effort to reconcile a shared climate vision. The climate change issue has been a proxy fight in infrastructure project after infrastructure project. It is a losing battle, because it is not solving the climate problem and it is not solving our economic problem. So I think there is a real important accomplishment in this piece of legislation that we really need to focus on and build upon, and build upon quickly.

Senator Booker. Thank you. Anyone else who would like to comment?

Mr. Lanham. One brief comment, Senator. The environment and meeting the public need for infrastructure is not mutually exclusive. We know that and understand that. But for both sides now, what we have to have is a process where there is accountability. We all can tell war stories on both sides of the issue. The abuse of the system and abuse of the process would either work to the detriment of the environment or work to

the detriment of a public improvement. That is not what this committee is about, and there needs to be accountability in the implementation of the vision this committee is putting forward. Without that accountability, we are going to continue to stumble and have these problems in the execution.

Senator Booker. Ms. Goldfuss, before you answer, I want to throw one more question on top for you. I was a former mayor who was in office during the Great Recession. I know firsthand that during economic downturns, like we are in right now, local governments face challenges. Right now there is an additional need for federal infrastructure investment to rebuild our Nation's infrastructure, frankly, and address a lot of the economic challenges we have. It is one of the best times to spend money because the cost of capital is so much cheaper.

I just want to get a little bit deeper with you on the old rail tunnels and the related infrastructure between New York and New Jersey. This literally is where the northeast region, which is one of the greatest economic regions on the entire planet, it is among the most critical infrastructure projects we have in our Country right now. I believe that our whole Country really is relying upon us, on the busiest rail corridor in all of North America, in doing something urgently.

This is a project I want you to comment on. Because if we do not act immediately to advance the Gateway program, not only

will New Jerseyans continue to suffer and see regional economic harm, but it will cause a harm to the entire Northeast region because of the countless hours of delay that we see, from affecting individual families, to regional economy. Should a tunnel shut down, it would be cataclysmic in terms of the effect on the economy, costing us about \$100 million each day.

On the other hand, though, on the positive side, every dollar that we invest in the Gateway Program provides \$4 in return to our economy. So in this time specially this project will create jobs, boost the economy, improve safety and the quality of life for New Jersey commuters.

So I just want to ask you, in addition to the biggest question, and I bet I will exceed my time, but can you discuss the need for, on large scale projects like this, of national significance, in the context of a comprehensive federal plan for stimulus economic recovery? The Gateway Program in particular, it is important to note that these tolls are just an example of the importance and effectiveness of NEPA, the NEPA process when it comes to large scale infrastructure.

So it is incredible that we have so many stakeholders nationally in a project like this, but we are still struggling with something as simple as an environmental impact statement with the Department of Transportation. I am so frustrated that we are years into this Administration and it continues to refuse

to even finalize an environmental impact statement which will allow us to go forward.

So I am just hoping that, Ms. Goldfuss, you could comment on that frustration as an example, frankly, of how the lack of efficiency within our bureaucracies, and this truly, what an impact it has on economic development on jobs, on the environment as well.

Ms. Goldfuss. Senator, I would just speak to your project and also the offshore wind projects that Senator Whitehouse raised. In both of these cases, there was very concerning evidence that politics has come into play in the environmental review process. Secretary Bernhardt is hugely critical of the environmental review process, yet decided to slap an entirely new set of environmental reviews on the offshore wind projects. It makes no sense.

Similarly, with the Gateway Project, we have clear evidence of the Trump Administration and officials joking about slowing down the environmental review for the Gateway Project. I know this committee does not believe that politics should be involved in these major, major infrastructure projects that would put people back to work. I am hoping that we are seizing on a moment here where we need to put people back to work. There is an understanding that we need funding and investment in communities to do that. And we will find a way to remove the

politics, understanding that jobs, whether they are around New York City, jobs offshore in Rhode Island, jobs in Wyoming, in any part of this Country are going to be essential to the recovery coming out of this recession.

Senator Booker. I will just say in conclusion, this is so utterly unacceptable, that something as simple as an environmental impact statement, which we have been waiting for for two years, this is clearly an example of not just bureaucracy, but playing politics with the most important infrastructure project in North America, and arguably because of its economic impact, not to mention its environmental impact.

Just to travel from Boston to Washington, D.C., we now move at half an hour slower than we did in the 1960s on the busiest rail corridor in America. It is absurd. It is unacceptable. China has built 18,000 miles of high-speed rail. Our busiest rail corridor in America moves half an hour slower than it did in the 1960s.

I am tired of the politics. This is outrageous. I have been working in a bipartisan manner with people on this committee and others, with Roger Wicker and others, to advance this project, to change legislation, to get everything done. Now we are facing holdups within the Trump Administration that are pure politics. There is no way to deny that. You can't even get this environmental impact statement. It is

frustrating.

When this whole committee hearing is talking about smoothing, expediting, getting things done, for the sake of our Nation and patriotism, it is so offensive to me that this project is being stalled because of politics, and really unacceptably hurting this Country, our economy, and the well-being of families in New Jersey and beyond.

I will submit the rest of my questions for the record.

Thank you.

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much. Senator Carper.

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I ask unanimous consent to submit into the record a letter from Scholars Across Disciplines, which studied the National Environmental Policy Act in federal decision-making. In short, the data that they have pointed to is even starker than we have been discussing. According to the research, far less than 1 percent of projects involve lengthy delays. Moreover, factors other than NEPA will likely contribute to the overall duration of these projects as well.

Senator Barrasso. Without objection, so ordered.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Carper. Thank you, sir.

One question, if I may, for Ms. Goldfuss, please. In your testimony, you cited a report by the Rhodium Group that was released on June 29th, 2020, I guess it was just a couple of days ago. As you stated the report found that, "The average Black American is exposed to 46 percent more diesel particulate matter emissions and 22 percent more air toxic respiratory hazards than White Americans."

Given those statistics, it seems that where and how we engage with communities to build roads in the future could help reduce this kind of pollution exposure. My question is simply, would you discuss how the existing NEPA processes, when conducted appropriately, could help communities address environmental injustices in transportation projects as well as build infrastructure more expeditiously and save taxpayers money, please?

Ms. Goldfuss. Thank you. When we conduct community engagement in an appropriate way, we identify the problems before we even start to build. So what are the concerns that a community raises about pollution, about location, about impacts to the cost of their community? In addition to that, we are able to share data about the particulate matter that is expected from a particular project, or about the other toxic pollution that could be a part of whatever development we need.

Lastly, we are able to look at how that is layered upon the other development and the other impacts in that community. I always talk about Mossville, Louisiana, which is surrounded by 12 petrochemical plants. It is in Cancer Alley. This particular community, it would be insane to propose another project, another industrial project, without looking at how you are adding to the overall toxic burden of that community, rather than some place in a remote place where this would be the only facility.

So when the NEPA process has done well, when we are building off of data from different agencies, and we are incorporating the feedback from communities, we get to a place where you are able to resolve problems, so that a project can go faster, and that you are able to understand what the impact is and what the concern is going to be at a local level before you get too far down the road, and site the project in a place where you will have the least amount of conflict.

So I know that is the rosier vision of how NEPA would work. But that is how it should work. If we have the tools, and there are tons of data tools, state of the art tools that we can use to expedite that process. And we have the will of a Federal Government that wants to listen to the people, not just the companies.

Mr. Grumet. Senator Carper, can I just add that in

addition to the project-focused decision making, we know we have two imperatives. We have an absolute imperative to build major projects very quickly. And we have an imperative not to exacerbate disparate impact on communities of color that have been burdened by environmental justice concerns.

We don't have to wait for a project to be proposed to understand the scope of these two challenges. What Congress tried to do in the 2005 Energy Policy Act was look forward and say, where should we build things? What are the critical corridors? How do we step back and say, we are going to need thousands of miles of power lines and pipelines and battery storage facilities and renewables. Where are the right places to put those, and where are the wrong places to put those?

We should be getting ahead of this conversation and understand in the communities that have been unfairly imposed upon and protecting those communities, not stumble into these processes one after one after one. We have a national imperative to do both these things at once.

I think NEPA is a tool, but it is not the only tool we should be thinking about. I think we need a much more proactive national planning process that tries to reconcile these two concerns.

Senator Carper. Thank you both very much for what you have said. I would ask Bob Lanham, if you have a comment you would

like to make before we conclude? Anything else you would like to add?

Mr. Lanham. Senator, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. It is amazing.

I would leave with you, I had the pleasure and privilege about 18 months ago, and much of the dialogue was the same 18 months ago. One thing a little bit absent that still I think is germane to our transportation network is based on what I see us do each and every day, building roads and bridges has to be one of the most sustainable construction processes in the Country. Yet it is a story that we do not tell. Between 2001 and 2009, we reconstructed 24 miles of Interstate 10 west of downtown Houston. And every bit of the concrete and base materials and pavements that were in the existing roadway was recycled and reused.

Senator Carper. That is good.

Mr. Lanham. Those stories around the Country are not told. I think we do ourselves a disservice to not being able to explain to the greater public about what actually happens on these projects.

Senator Carper. Good. I am glad I asked, and I am glad you answered. That was a good note to close on.

Mr. Chairman, this has been an extraordinary panel and I think quite a productive hearing. Thank you all.

Senator Barrasso. We thank all of you as well for being here, for joining us and for sharing your great insights on these very important topics. There are no other questions today, but there is going to be an opportunity for some members to submit some written questions. They may do that in the next couple of weeks, so we are going to keep the hearing record open for two weeks.

I want to just thank you again for being here. It was very helpful. I am glad you were able to get out of the house for the first time in three months. We will have to have you back again some time soon. Thank you to all three of you.

With that, I do have a unanimous consent request for materials for the record. Unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and a statement from the National Sand, Stone and Gravel Association in support of today's hearing.

Without objection, they will be submitted to the record.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Barrasso. With that, the hearing is adjourned.
Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:34 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]