

**Testimony of Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Transportation  
Before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
March 2, 2022**

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Department of Transportation’s ongoing work to implement President Biden’s historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

I want to begin by thanking you for everything you did to craft and pass this urgently needed piece of legislation, a landmark that we believe will stand to the credit of this Congress and this administration alike.

As members of this Committee know well, America’s infrastructure fell into a state of disrepair for decades—and the American people rightly demanded action. We had yet another blunt reminder of the urgency and need just last month in Pittsburgh, with the collapse of the Fern Hollow Bridge. As I’ve traveled across the country, I’ve seen supply chains straining, bridges out of service, and critical infrastructure destroyed by increasingly frequent climate disasters. The need for major investment has long been clear, and now, this President and this Congress have delivered the means to address that need.

Through this law, we are now in the early stages of a generational modernization of our infrastructure that will serve to bolster our economic security and prosperity for decades to come. The investments now underway will strengthen our goods movement and supply chains; reduce costs for American consumers; make it easier and safer for people to get where they need to be; help tackle the climate crisis; and create good-paying jobs building bridges, paving roads, electrifying buses, installing EV chargers, laying track, and so much more.

At DOT, we’re working to implement these investments according to the new law, with a focus on: making our nation’s roads safer; making our transportation systems cleaner, more accessible, and more resilient to climate impacts; and enabling all Americans to share in the benefits equitably.

We began our work as soon as the President signed the new law. In the past 90 days, we have already put forward a total of \$60 billion in authorized funding to states and communities—and we’ve opened applications for another \$2 billion in discretionary grant programs. Our Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced the largest annual apportionment of highway funds in decades—more than \$52 billion for states to repair and rebuild our roads, bridges, and highways, making them safer and more resilient.

With regard to federal-aid highway funding, I want to pause and emphasize the importance of the relationship between my department and our state partners, because I know that has been of particular interest to members of this Committee. I want to make clear that we recognize and value the role of the states in deciding how to prioritize the use of formula dollars, as laid out in the law.

Different states and communities have different needs when it comes to transportation assets that have to be reconfigured and modernized, expanded and added, or retired and replaced, as appropriate, and we look forward to our continued support of state transportation departments as they undertake this work.

And I am proud to affirm the virtues of what so many states—from Alabama, to Virginia, to my home state of Indiana, and many more—have been doing to focus on repairing the vital infrastructure we already have. That philosophy is something we at DOT share with state leaders across the country—Republicans and Democrats alike—who are working to maintain and modernize the roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure that their residents count on every day. Maintaining and improving our existing infrastructure is critical to building a better, cleaner, more modern transportation system, and now we can bring new resources and energy to this work.

FHWA recently launched our new Bridge Formula Program—the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the creation of the Interstate Highway System—with more than \$26 billion to repair and replace our bridges, so we can avoid devastating collapses and closures like the ones we’ve seen recently.

We’ve established a Joint Office of Energy and Transportation with the Department of Energy, followed by our announcement of \$5 billion in support for states as they draw up plans to build out what will become a national network of EV chargers, half a million strong by 2030.

We’ve opened applications for some of our most significant grant programs—with more funding than ever, thanks to the infrastructure law—including our RAISE, Port Infrastructure Development, and Airport Terminal Programs, with more soon to come.

We’re working closely with state Departments of Transportation and other project sponsors to ensure they have the flexibility and support they need to deploy all these funds in ways that make sense for their communities—while ensuring that the expenditure of these funds meets our shared public policy goals and the high standards for the use of federal taxpayer dollars.

All of us worked to enact the infrastructure law for the same reason: because we know it will do so much to make life better for the American people. It will improve everyday life for the traveling public and anyone who counts on our supply chains. It will ease daily commutes and long-haul travel alike. And it will create jobs. We at DOT look forward to continuing our work with all of you to bring the ambitious vision of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to life across our country.

Thank you again for inviting me to be here today; I look forward to your questions.