



BUILDING BACK BETTER: INVESTING IN TRANSPORTATION WHILE  
ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE, IMPROVING EQUITY, AND FOSTERING  
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

United States Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

The committee, met, pursuant to notice, at 10:18 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable Thomas R. Carper [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Carper, Capito, Cardin, Sanders, Whitehouse, Merkley, Markey, Duckworth, Stabenow, Kelly, Padilla, Inhofe, Cramer, Lummis, Boozman, Sullivan, Ernst, Graham, Rounds.

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

Senator Carper. Good morning, everyone. I want to call this hearing to order. We are delighted to be joined today virtually by a noteworthy panel of witnesses to discuss with us surface transportation infrastructure: Governor Whitmer, Governor Hogan, Mayor Hancock, and Commissioner Sheehan. We want to welcome each of them to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works' first policy hearing of the 117th Congress.

In Washington today, as I walked up from the train station, Union Station to the Capitol, I couldn't help but notice that the sun has come out. The weather forecast is 60 degrees, thank you, God, after a week of brutal winter storms. But despite the sun and the blue skies that greeted us this morning, our Country still faces some major hurdles, as we all know.

While our economy is starting to show signs of life, close to 15 million people in the United States remain unemployed, and roughly half of them have given up looking for a job. Across Texas, families are struggling to recover, as we know, from a catastrophic ice storm, with over eight million people -- eight million people -- still without safe drinking water, the latest tragedy in the increasingly frequent extreme weather and climate events of recent years.

This comes on the heels of last year's raging wildfires in California and Colorado the size of my State, hurricane-force winds in Iowa that flattened a third of that State's crops last year. Get this, this is what John Neely Kennedy told me yesterday. He said every 100 minutes, Louisiana loses a football field of land to rising sea levels. Every 100 minutes. If that happened in Delaware, we would be gone in about a year, but they are disappearing in Louisiana, as well.

Scientists tell us that if climate change is left unchecked, these disasters are not going to get better, they will just get worse. A raging pandemic, as well, we face a raging pandemic. Millions of jobless Americans. A growing climate crisis that demands bold action.

The question is, what do we do about it? What do we do about it? Well, there is some good news. That is, as it turns out, smart investments in our transportation infrastructure will enable us to tackle all three of these challenges.

We can improve the conditions of our roads, highways, and bridges in ways that create millions of good-paying jobs, lift up our communities, build a more sustainable economy, and improve our air quality for a healthier, more prosperous future for all of us. The American people are counting on us to make this happen. They don't want to hear us talking about what needs to be done. They want us to work together and get it

done.

As we gather today, less than half of our federal-aid highways and bridges are in good condition. Much of our infrastructure is significantly outdated. It was built for different ranges of temperatures, rainfall, and sea levels. In the last 10 years, we have put nearly \$19 billion in emergency funds in addition to what we have already provided from the Highway Trust Fund.

Poor road conditions and design flaws create safety challenges, too. Motor vehicle crashes are one of the top causes of unintentional lethal injuries in the United States. Pedestrians and bicyclists face particularly grave challenges as roads are too often designed without a safe place to bike or even cross the street. In the last decade, we have seen a 44 percent increase in pedestrian fatalities on our roads. Think about that: a 44 percent increase in just one decade.

The burdens of poor road conditions are disproportionately shouldered by marginalized communities. Low-income families and peoples of color are frequently left behind or left out by our investments in infrastructure, blocking their access to jobs and educational opportunities.

So, there is a clear need for modernized transportation infrastructure that is safer and more sustainable while better ensuring that we treat other people the way we want to be

treated. Fortunately, our committee has a roadmap that will enable us to meet these needs and more.

Last Congress, as many will recall, our committee unanimously reported a bipartisan reauthorization bill that outlined an historic investment in our Nation's surface transportation programs. Unfortunately, the full Senate never acted on it. But now, we have an opportunity to build on that promise and actually enact a bill that transforms our transportation sector into one that is more innovative, more resilient, and safer, while creating good-paying jobs, lots of them.

Let me briefly touch on some of the key policy priorities for our next reauthorization bill that will help make that vision a reality. Auto manufacturers are preparing to greatly expand their lines of electric and hydrogen-fueled vehicles, but too often, drivers lack access to the charging and fueling stations that these vehicles require. America needs to build corridors of charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations across the Country. We also have to make it easier for people to walk safely, bike, or take public transit, so driving isn't the only way to get where we need to go.

We need to strengthen our infrastructure so that it can withstand the devastating effects of extreme weather and climate change, which we are witnessing with alarming frequency. Last

year alone, natural disasters fueled by climate change cost us over \$95 billion dollars in economic damage. Smart planning to make our infrastructure more resilient will save American taxpayers dollars while helping us avoid rebuilding the same infrastructure projects again and again after severe weather events.

As we work with State and local partners, there must be accountability to ensure that federal funds are invested in well-designed projects that expand equity and lift up our Nation as a whole.

Now, the most challenging part of any discussion on transportation infrastructure: how are we going to pay for it?

When I was new in the Senate, the guy who sat behind me was Ted Kennedy. I didn't know him very well, and one day, I suggested maybe we have a cup of coffee. He actually invited me to his hideaway for lunch, which was quite a thrill. I asked him there, during lunch, I said, "Why do all these Republicans want you to be their lead cosponsor on their big bills? Why is that? You are such a big, liberal Democrat from Massachusetts. Why is that?"

I will never forget what he said. He said, "I am always willing to compromise on policy; never willing to compromise on principle." That is what he said. Always willing to compromise on policy, never willing to compromise on principle.

Well, let's talk a little bit about some of the principles I hope we ought to be able to agree on in this regard. For one, much of our transportation infrastructure is in sorry shape. Unfortunately, a lot of it is getting worse, not better. This is not something the Federal Government should do alone. This is an all-hands-on-deck moment.

The second principle that I think most of us can agree on is that things worth having are worth paying for. We can't just continue to put all of our improvements that are needed on our Country's credit card.

I would suggest that a third principle should be that those of us who use our Nation's roads, highways, and bridges have a responsibility to help pay for them. Now, with principles like that, what I hope we will do is develop a bunch of policies that are consistent with those principles.

A growing number of people believe that a national Vehicle Miles Traveled approach will eventually fund much of our transportation infrastructure in the not-too-distant future. Mary Barra announced that General Motors, as Senator Stabenow knows, what is it, by 2035, they will not be building any more vehicles, cars, trucks, or vans powered by gasoline or diesel. That was a wake-up call, wasn't it?

The reauthorization bill this committee adopted unanimously in the last Congress called for a national VMT pilot for all 50

States. It was a good idea then; it is an even better idea now.

If vehicle miles traveled turns out to be a big part of the future of transportation funding, we are going to need a bridge, or likely, several bridges, to get us to that future for the next decade or so. For that, we are going to be looking to the Finance Committee for help, some of us serve on that Finance Committee, for help in funding the next five-year reauthorization, and the Senate Committees on Banking and Commerce have major roles to play, too.

In closing, I am going to say last Congress, EPW led by example, something that we learned in the Navy, didn't we, Mark? We unanimously approved our bill to improve and expand our surface transportation programs, and we did it 14 months before the last five-year surface transportation reauthorization bill expired. That was one, I think, authored by Senator Inhofe, if I am not mistaken.

It is imperative, however, that this year, our sister committees join us now to begin the critical work that needs to be done and to help get it across the finish line and signed into law long before this fiscal year ends.

Senator Capito and I, along with our staffs, are already getting to work. Last week, we invited all of our Senate colleagues, not just on this committee, but all Senate colleagues, Democrat, Republican, Independent, to share with us

their States' policy priorities, transportation policy priorities with us so we can begin drafting legislation not this summer, but this spring. Our goal is to mark up our bill and report it out of our committee no later than Memorial Day.

I don't want to get our bill there alone without having some company from the Banking Committee and also from the Commerce Committee. They have to do their part as well, and then Finance.

The conversation we are about to have today in this hearing is critical to that effort. The stakes are high, and a lot of people across the Country are counting on us to do our jobs in order to better ensure that they will have the kind of jobs that will enable them to support their own families far into the future.

Before we hear from our distinguished panel of witnesses, we are going to have some introductions. Before we hear those introductions, Senator Capito is going to be recognized, our Ranking Member, for her opening remarks. Let me just say what a joy it has been serving with you on this new partnership, and we look forward to doing great work for our States and for our Country.

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA

Senator Capito. Thank you. Thank you, and I share the sentiment, Chairman Carper. We have a great thing going here, communication-wise. I thank your leadership and your partnership for today's hearing to kick off this process, which I think is important to every member, and I think we all tune into what we are going to do on a surface transportation bill.

I would also like to thank our witnesses, who are going to be with us remotely today. We look forward to hearing your perspectives on surface transportation policy and other issues of infrastructure importance to your State.

Mr. Chairman, I enjoy our regular conversations on the bill and other important matters before the committee, and I enjoyed your opening statement, particularly talking about, since I serve on Commerce as well, I am in a good position to gig our chairman there and the other committees that need to be so important.

I was really encouraged by the conversation that we had last week, or I guess two weeks ago now, with President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Buttigieg on the importance of what we are talking about today. I think the meeting signified a commitment by the Administration to see that this bill becomes a reality, as this is one of my top priorities as

our Ranking Member.

It is also about more than just building our infrastructure. This bill can facilitate a recovery from the pandemic that has devastated our communities and wreaked havoc on our communities and our economy. Transportation infrastructure is the platform that can drive economic growth, all American jobs, right there, right on the ground, now and in the future, and improve the quality of life for everyone, on the safety aspects which you so well addressed.

I am optimistic we can deliver that bill before the current extension expires on September 30th, and I noted your commitment to Memorial Day is a good marker. Our committee has a strong track record of developing these bills in a bipartisan manner. Our former chair can attest to that. We passed an excellent bill out of committee, 21 to nothing, in 2019, that represented bipartisan consensus on issues such as climate change and expediting project delivery.

We can come together, and, once again, use this bipartisan process to develop a bill that includes priorities from both parties. I know such a process is what you want as well, Mr. Chairman.

From my perspective, a surface transportation reauthorization bill must, number one, provide long-term investment in our Nation's roads and bridges in a fiscally

responsible manner with partisan or lightning rod pay-fors, of course, that would be over in the Finance Committee, that could sink a bill.

The last thing we want to do is have a bill getting out of here that doesn't go anywhere. We experienced that last time; we don't want to experience that again.

We want to give flexibility to our States, and I think our panelists will give us a good idea of that, to address unique transportation needs. We want to keep the federal interest focused on providing a connected network of roads and bridges to assure that all communities and the economy can thrive.

We want to facilitate the efficient delivery of projects, perennial issues, so that we can improve safety and resiliency of our surface transportation system, and we want to drive innovation. I think that is critical to help pave the way for the system of the future.

As we will hear from our witnesses today, certainty of funding, consistency of regulations, and flexibility in tailoring investments to suit the diverse needs of State, rural, and urban communities is essential. In West Virginia, for instance, we need additional highway capacity and bridge improvements to improve safety and increase our efficiencies.

Corridor H, which goes through the middle of our State, has been one of my biggest West Virginia transportation priorities.

I have been working on this throughout my time in Congress. It is the last piece of the Appalachian Development Highway System needed to better connect West Virginia for interstate and intrastate traffic.

Our job is to provide a policy and programmatic framework that recognizes the different transportation needs across the Country while balancing important national goals. We also need to efficiently deliver projects that improve our roads and bridges. With an average of seven years to complete an environmental impact statement for a highway project, surely everyone can agree that this process should be reviewed and improved upon. We know time is money. The longer the time, the more money it costs, and the less likelihood that it actually gets complete.

We also know to look at other issues that can impact the delivery of projects and create a better process to move forward from concept to completion. For example, removing impediments to constructing reliable high-speed broadband across the Country in concert with our road projects. We cannot afford to delay the benefits to States and communities that come from these projects.

We should be forward leaning in tackling the transportation needs not just of today, but those needs of tomorrow. Driving innovation will be critical to supporting the surface

transportation system of the future. It will also aid our efforts to reinvest in our existing system. That includes cutting-edge technologies, like the Virgin Hyperloop, which will be tested and certified in Tucker and Grant Counties in West Virginia.

I am committed to working on these issues that are important to my friends on the other side of the aisle, and I know they are willing to do the same. There is a lot of common ground from both of our sides. We share the same goal: getting a bill across the finish line that delivers on addressing the transportation needs of our entire Nation.

I will add, I hesitate to do this, because we have got a lot of good feeling going here, but to temper my optimism -- should I stop now?

Senator Carper. Your time has expired.

[Laughter.]

Senator Carper. No, go ahead.

Senator Capito. I temper my optimism with a word of caution, particularly, when I read this morning the words from the Budget chair in the Senate on the direction this bill may go. The strong bipartisan support that exists for a surface transportation reauthorization bill and other infrastructure legislation should not extend to a multi-trillion-dollar package that is stocked full with other ideologically-driven one-size-

fits-all policies that ties the hands of our States and our communities. I look forward to being a partner and advancing infrastructure legislation in a bipartisan way.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to hearing the testimony. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Capito follows:]

Senator Carper. Senator Capito, thank you very much for all of your statement. All of it.

Before we turn to our witnesses to hear from them, we are fortunate to have a panel of public officials who have all wrestled with the challenges of transportation at the State and local levels. I am privileged to know several of them, but not all of them. We are going to hear their testimony in a moment, but let's just start with a few brief introductions. I am going to begin by recognizing Senator Stabenow to introduce our first witness from her State, her own home State, the great State of Michigan. Senator Stabenow, we are delighted that you are a member of this committee. Delighted.

Senator Stabenow. Well, thank you so much, Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito. I have great confidence in both of your leaderships, and I am looking forward to really important work in a number of areas, particularly around surface transportation reauthorization. Thank you for bringing together this distinguished panel to offer their collective insights and perspectives on how to address our Nation's pressing transportation needs.

I first have to say that I want to thank Governor Whitmer for her outstanding leadership in addressing the COVID pandemic, as well as, I know, Governor Hogan. I can't imagine more difficult decisions than the ones that you have had to make,

certainly in Michigan, to keep people safe and save lives, so thank you. I know, again, Governor Hogan has had the same challenges.

I am very pleased that Governor Whitmer could join us today to speak about investing in infrastructure and what it means to the State of Michigan and to the Midwest and to our Country, and frankly, our future. You have her bio in front on you, but I would like to add a few additional comments.

Governor Whitmer was elected in 2018 in part because of her promise to fix Michigan's aging infrastructure systems. Since being elected governor, she put forward bold proposals to address the condition of Michigan's roads and bridges. She launched the Rebuilding Michigan Program to rebuild the State highways and bridges that are critical to our local economy and carry the most traffic.

So I look forward today to hearing her thoughts and ideas on how we are addressing climate change through infrastructure that is creating good-paying jobs and leading us to a more sustainable future. I welcome Governor Gretchen Whitmer from the great State of Michigan.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Senator Stabenow, and welcome, Governor Whitmer. I know you are out there, and we welcome you to our hearing today. We are honored to have you here.

I will now recognize my friend, Senator Ben Cardin, for

another special introduction of my neighboring State's governor, Governor Hogan. Ben, please proceed.

Senator Cardin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It really is a pleasure to welcome Governor Larry Hogan to our committee.

Let me just assure our guests that are coming to us virtually that we are in a committee room that is complying with the CDC guidelines. We are distanced apart. But Governor Hogan, I am following your advice and I am wearing the damn mask.

[Laughter.]

Senator Cardin. For those of you who have seen the commercial that he has used, it is been, I think, very effective. I just really want to thank Governor Hogan and Governor Whitmer for being very clear from the beginning about the seriousness of COVID-19. The advice that you gave our citizens clearly saved lives.

So first, thank you for the leadership that you have shown during this pandemic. We all appreciate it. We are very much trying to work in partnership.

Governor Hogan was first elected in 2014 as the Governor of Maryland. As I think most of you know, he became the head of the National Governors Association. In that capacity, he worked with us in regards to the passage of the CARES Act, and in regards to the passage of the December COVID Relief Package.

Thank you very much for your work in that regard.

We have Team Maryland. Our congressional delegation works very closely with our governor on the needs of our State. We couldn't have, I think, a more important witness to talk about the transportation needs.

Maryland set up many years ago a consolidated trust fund, so that we can share the resources in any mode of transportation and use it to be able to advance the transportation needs of our State. It gives us much more flexibility.

But I know Governor Hogan will share with us the tremendous needs that we have in the State of Maryland, and we need a more robust federal partnership. Yes, Senator Capito, I could talk about the Appalachia Highway Program. We need to complete that, and we need resources for that. I could talk about the Bay Bridge and the Eastern part of our State.

But when we look at our urban centers, we have desperate equity needs. We need to advance our transit in the Baltimore Area. It is absolutely essential. We have the WMATA system in the Washington Area, the Purple Line. We have the concerns in Southern Maryland as far as transit is concerned in regards to rail. Very appreciative that we got an INFRA grant that allows us to move forward with the Howard Street Tunnel, which is critically important for freight traffic on the East Coast of the United States.

But we have passenger rail needs for high-speed rail in order to deal with the gridlocks that we have in our community. Yes, we have bridges that need to be replaced, we have roads that need to be done, we have the I-270 issue.

So there are so many issues in our State that we need a more robust Federal partnership so that we can deal with the issues Chairman Carper has mentioned, and that is the equities and the climate change and those issues, in a way that can be a win-win situation that we modernize our transportation needs, and we can also deal with our equity and environmental issues. I am pleased that Governor Hogan is here to share his wisdom on those issues with our committee.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Senator Cardin. I just want to say, Senator Cardin and I like baseball, and so does Senator Stabenow and maybe some other folks on this panel. Every now and then, Ben will take me with him to see an Orioles game. I am a huge Detroit Tigers fan, and I have a baseball signed by Al Kaline, Mr. Tiger, who grew up and played sandlot baseball where?

Senator Cardin. Baltimore City.

Senator Carper. Baltimore. He won the American Batting Championship at the age of 21, and he passed away last year. A great human being.

Senator Cardin. Are you going to give me that one?

Senator Carper. I have several of these; I could probably do that.

In any event, I brought my Detroit Tigers hat, and I would just say, and my Al Kaline baseball, from where Al Kaline started in the sandlots of Baltimore. That is a little bit of a history lesson that involves all of us, but one that I think is maybe worth mentioning at least briefly here today.

I take my hat off to our panel today, and again, Governor Hogan, our neighbor across the water, welcome to this hearing. We have two other esteemed witnesses on our panel today, Mayor Michael Hancock, who is joining us from Denver, Colorado, the mayor of Denver since 2011, a decade. Thank you, Mayor, for taking time out of your busy schedule to join us.

We are also fortunate to have Victoria Sheehan, not Shaheen, we have a Senator named Shaheen, but Commissioner of New Hampshire. I wonder if people get that confused, Ben. I bet they probably do, up in New Hampshire.

Anyway, Commissioner, we are delighted you are here to testify with us virtually. Currently the President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. So I can tell my wife tonight that we actually heard from the President, which you don't really hear from every day.

Our thanks to all of you for joining us. Thanks for your preparation. Thanks for joining us virtually.

Governor Whitmer, we are going to start with you. You may proceed when you are ready. Thanks so much. Thank you all.

Welcome, one and all.

Governor Whitmer?

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GRETCHEN WHITMER, GOVERNOR, STATE OF MICHIGAN

Governor Whitmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and go, Tigers.

I am glad to be with you and Ranking Member Capito and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify before your first hearing of the 117th Congress.

I also want to thank Michigan's own Senator, Debbie Stabenow, for the kind introduction. I am honored to appear before you today to discuss how investing in transportation and leading on climate change are pathways to economic growth in Michigan and across the Country.

I want to talk about what is possible if we work together to address the big challenges head-on. I am glad to be here with my friend, Larry Hogan, who you quoted as saying "wear the damn mask." Well, before that, I was known for running on and getting elected to "fix the damn roads" in Michigan. I have to say that we need significant investments in our roads and bridges.

Since taking office, my administration has been focused on taking action to build and to rebuild a better Michigan. Our focus on infrastructure has not waned during the COVID-19 pandemic. I will work with anyone who wants to build up our roads and bridges, including our federal partners. We welcome it, because without significant investments in infrastructure,

my State and our Nation will struggle to remain competitive.

A total of 43 percent of Michigan's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and approximately a thousand local bridges are in poor or critical condition. Driving on deteriorated roads and bridges costs Michiganders \$4.67 billion annually. That is \$659 per motorist. Damaged infrastructure in any area affects personal mobility, affects our safety, and it slows our economic recovery. We have a big opportunity in front of us.

At the start of my term, I proposed spending \$2.5 billion to fix Michigan's roads, but we could not reach a consensus in Lansing. Doing nothing was not an option, so I implemented Plan B, and that is a \$3.5 billion bonding program called Rebuilding Michigan to restore our State trunklines. This year, I proposed \$300 million in my budget to begin tackling our backlog of closed or critical condition bridges.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on our transportation revenues, and we desperately need federal assistance. Doing nothing shouldn't be an option at the federal level, either, and I am heartened by the opening comments of today's hearing. We need long-term, sustainable, Federal sources for our infrastructure.

I hope the committee considers the stakes of the moment that we are in as it drafts the transportation reauthorization

bill this year. But we also need a plan that goes beyond just roads. We need a national vision when it comes to transportation, much like the interstate highway system offered 65 years ago. To build a more equitable economy and tackle climate change, we need your help, your leadership.

For too long, there is been a misconception that preparing for the future comes at the expense of economic growth and good-paying jobs today, but it is not a binary choice. It is not an either-or; it is really a both-and. The health of our economy is inextricably linked to the health of our people and our planet.

Whether it is a global pandemic or natural disasters caused by climate change, we have seen first-hand how failing to invest in environmental protection and public health can devastate our Country. In industrial States like Michigan, we have lost jobs to automation and modernization. In the past, big changes created winners and losers, and the government didn't get involved until after the fact. This time, we have got to put workers and communities first, and ensure that people who are threatened by change are able to benefit from it.

Electrification will create jobs, and Michigan is leading in this space. Since I was sworn in in 2019, we have announced over 11,400 new auto jobs, and more on the way. We have committed to being carbon-neutral by 2050, a goal that is

aggressive and means that we are going to have to work together to achieve it. We have incredible assets, like the American Center for Mobility, and a 40-mile driverless lane from Detroit to Ann Arbor that Senator Stabenow was a part of announcing.

There are great jobs that can be created by new mobility technologies as well, but it is going to require a new set of skills, and that is something where I think we can partner as well. Michigan has earned several names or expressions over the years. We are the State that put the world on wheels, the birthplace of motels, the arsenal of democracy during World War II. In the next century, Michigan is going to be the arsenal of ideas and innovation.

At the national level, we have to invest in resilient infrastructure, emerging industries, and transportation. We need policies that will uplift communities that are disproportionately impacted by the transition, address environmental justice, and tackle climate change.

We can't shrink away from the crises that we face. We have to go big and be bold, so let's get to work.

I thank you so much for having me today, and I am really looking forward to your questions, and of course, hearing from my fellow witnesses. Glad to be with you.

[The prepared statement of Governor Whitmer follows:]

Senator Carper. Governor Whitmer, thanks for your testimony.

Senator Barrasso, who used to sit, actually, used to sit right here as the chairman until very, very recently, he and I love music. Every now and then, we have quips about music. I am trying to think of a Motown song that might be appropriate for us as we get ready to get started. I don't know it was the Temptations or the Four Tops, but Get Your Motor Runnin', Head Out on the Highway, Get Ready, Here We Come, one of those two probably works. So, get ready, here we come.

Thank you, Governor, and thank you also for sending us Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, two of our best.

Again, Governor Hogan, thanks for joining us this morning. You may proceed with your testimony. Thanks, Governor.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LAWRENCE J. HOGAN, JR., GOVERNOR,  
STATE OF MARYLAND

Governor Hogan. Well, good morning, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, my Team Maryland member, Senator Cardin, thank you, and members of the committee. Thanks for having me. It is also really good to be with my colleague and friend, Governor Whitmer, this morning.

As chairman of the National Governor's Association, pre-COVID, I launched a national infrastructure initiative, which was focused on repairing and modernizing America's infrastructure in ways that will drive long-term economic growth while addressing short-term recovery needs. It would encourage innovation and efficient approaches to delivering projects that build the transportation networks of the future.

For this national initiative, we brought together thought leaders from all levels of government, from business and labor and academia to get their input. We held a series of stakeholder summits across the Country and around the world to tackle an issue that is so fundamental to our economy, our environment, and our way of life.

We released a final report with a series of recommendations, including a number related to the reauthorization of a long-term federal surface transportation bill. The National Governor's Association recommends that

States should be granted maximum flexibility to relieve congestion and to invest in adaptable and innovative solutions with more reliability and certainty of formula funding.

To reduce program burdens and improve project delivery, we recommend that the One Federal Decision policy should be codified for highway projects, to establish a two-year goal for completion of environmental reviews and a 90-day timeline for related project authorizations.

We recommend that Congress make investments in resiliency and security to allow us to harness the full potential of financing and leveraging private sector investment, which has been critical to our success here in the State of Maryland, where we have taken a balanced approach, an all-inclusive approach to infrastructure.

We are moving forward on nearly all of the highest priority transportation projects in every jurisdiction all across our State, and investing far more in roads and transit than any other administration in Maryland history. We have over 800 projects, totaling \$9 billion, in roads, bridges, and tunnels currently under construction. We have improved more than 85 percent of our entire State highway system, invested \$150 million in innovative traffic congestion solutions, smart technology, and cutting-edge smart signalization networks.

We advanced the Purple Line from Prince George's County to

Montgomery County in the Washington Capital region, which is a partnership between the federal, State, and local governments and the private sector. It is the largest P3 transit project under construction in North America.

Just last week, we announced the procurement of a developer for the largest P3 highway project in the world to relieve traffic congestion on I-270 and I-495, the Capital Beltway, and to finally build a new American Legion Bridge across the Potomac River. My fellow governors all across America have similar success stories to share.

In States throughout the Nation, they are upgrading roads, bridges, and mass transit; they are improving airports and ports, fixing aging water systems, and expanding rural and urban broadband. Investing in infrastructure is more important than ever as we work to bring the pandemic to an end and to get more people back to work and to build a sustainable economic recovery.

As I said recently to President Biden when I was with him in the Oval Office, the governors urge that any major infrastructure effort be bipartisan. Democrats and Republicans, business and labor leaders, all of us believe that infrastructure should be a top national priority. Governors on both sides of the aisle have shown that there are more than enough good, common-sense ideas where we can find bipartisan

support. We stand ready to work with you in this effort. Together we can rebuild America's infrastructure so that it will once again serve as an example for the rest of the world. We hope that this hearing will serve as a springboard for real progress.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for giving me the opportunity to be here with you today.

[The prepared statement of Governor Hogan follows:]

Senator Carper. Governor Hogan, thanks so much. Thank you for your leadership in the National Governor's Association. As a former governor, former NGA Chair myself, we value very much the NGA and look forward to partnering with the NGA. You could probably play a key role in that, and we look forward to that.

Governor Hogan. Thank you, Chairman.

Senator Carper. You bet.

Next, we are going to stay with the baseball theme, on the on-deck circle, is Mayor Hancock from Denver. It is one of the positions I always thought would be fun to have, but maybe yes, maybe no. We will see.

Mayor Hancock, welcome today, and you are recognized.  
Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL B. HANCOCK, MAYOR, CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

Mayor Hancock. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, to the Ranking Member, and committee members. It is an honor to be here with you.

First, let me thank you as well for your leadership and for acting on COVID-19 relief in the last Congress. I speak on behalf of all local governments. We thank you for your tremendous leadership and support. I am honored to be here with Governors Whitmer and Hogan and with Secretary Sheehan.

Now as we address the new Congress, the first thing I want to share is that we hope and encourage you to act on the American Rescue Plan to deliver much-needed fiscal relief to cities and counties across this Country. We have been the first responders to this pandemic, our first line of defense for the majority of our citizens in this great Country. But we need your continued help and support, and we thank you for what you have done in the past, and we are encouraged by what we hope you will do in the future.

Mr. Chairman, let me recognize your personal efforts on our behalf, as well. It is not been lost on us that you have advocated for direct funding to cities and counties throughout this Country, and we are greatly appreciative of your efforts. As a former governor, you know all about State and local

finance. We thank you for talking to your colleagues about the challenges we face. Now, as we look to build back better, it is about reviving our economy at every level and doing it in ways that confront the key challenges before us.

Mr. Chairman, you mentioned just recently in this hearing about what Motown song might be appropriate for this moment. It got me to thinking as a music fan myself, that the song Ain't No Mountain High Enough by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell might be appropriate for this theme of building back better. Local governments have recognized there ain't no mountain too high for us, for our residents to make sure that their quality of life is sustained, and that we provide safe passage on our roadways.

Investing in transportation and other infrastructure we recognize is the cornerstone of that effort. Let me speak to the surface transportation specifically, because FAST Act reauthorization is before you this year. The structure of the FAST Act is sound. It is built on the foundation of the ISTEA that this committee set 30 years ago, and the law can be adapted to confront the challenges we are discussing today: climate, equity, economic recovery, and innovation. It can advance recovery in local areas where people and small businesses have been most harmed by this pandemic.

My written testimony addresses these challenges in more detail, but I want to share this message with you all today. We

ask you to rely on your local leaders. Invest in us, and again, there has been no mountain too high for us as we work to address the challenges facing our citizens. We ask you to lean on us, to challenge us, to lead us out of this pandemic and help recover our economy.

My recommendation is simply this, and I recognize that this is a pebble in the pond that is going to send a ripple effect and might be contrary to what some of the previous testimony has been, but we believe that one, you need to use the Surface Transportation Block Grant to accomplish this. Two, we ask you to direct all these flexible resources to local areas, to metro areas like Denver, and to smaller areas, working through the States. This expanding commitment means using local leaders to address key priorities in areas where most people live and work, and by investing more in metropolitan areas, cities, and counties, where most of our economic output is generated.

Today, I offer this division of labor: keep States focused on intercity and interstate corridors with resources from the National Highway Performance Program; and two, use the Surface Transportation Block Grant to local areas to lift the economy for the local level up and accelerate progress on the key priorities before us. Increasing STBG funds to local areas, we believe, is the best way to deal with conditions on the ground during a pandemic, and after. It is also the best way to move

the needle on key priorities before us and put us on the track for transitioning from rescue to recovery. It is efficient; it means we can address equity and climate much more prudently on the local level.

Mr. Chairman, this is a seminal moment for Federal transportation policy and for broad infrastructure policy. Mayors will be prepared to support this committee as we learn more about the direction you take on a broader infrastructure recovery package. Mayors and other local leaders are ready, willing, and more than capable of delivering for the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to join you today, and we look forward to the testimony and your Q and A session.

[The prepared statement of Mayor Hancock follows:]

Senator Carper. Mayor Hancock, Senator Stabenow and I heard it through the grapevine that you were a big Marvin Gaye fan. I guess you are.

Mayors are going to play a big role in this legislation as we go forward, and we welcome your participation, but also mayors across the Country, just as we welcome the involvement of our governors.

Next, the fourth witness today on our panel is Victoria Sheehan. Commissioner Sheehan, thank you for joining us, and please proceed with your statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE VICTORIA SHEEHAN, COMMISSIONER, NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

Ms. Sheehan. Good morning, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to appear today and speak to the critical need for timely reauthorization of the federal surface transportation legislation.

My name is Victoria Sheehan, and I serve as the Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, and as President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, or AASHTO. Today, it is my honor to testify on behalf of the Granite State and AASHTO, which represents the State Departments of Transportation in all 50 States, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico.

First, allow me to express on behalf of all the State DOTs our gratitude for your leadership on the \$10 billion in COVID-19 relief provided last December. We also thank you for your firm commitment to getting the federal surface transportation bill done on time, as well as possibly providing infrastructure funding as part of a future economic stimulus and recovery package.

This morning, I would like to begin by discussing why timely reauthorization of the federal surface transportation

programs is so important. New Hampshire, as a small, rural State, relies heavily on federal funds to make infrastructure improvements. Any delay, or even worse, a series of short-term extensions would wreak havoc across the Country and would impact not just State DOTs, but our partners, which are local governments and the construction industry.

Further, a stable federal surface transportation program has become even more crucial as States like my own continue to deal with the loss of State revenue with the impacts of the pandemic. Here in New Hampshire, we use federal funds to complete projects across the State, projects such as the reconstruction of Route 16 in rural communities like Cambridge, Gorham, and Errol, and to make safety improvements like the intersection of Routes 16 and 41 in Ossipee, New Hampshire.

We also invest in large-scale projects in more urban areas using the federal program and the funding tools it provides to ensure that major projects are not advanced at the expense of smaller projects in less populated regions of the State. As an example, to complete the reconstruction of Interstate 93 from Salem to Manchester, New Hampshire secured a TIFIA loan. This loan has allowed the Granite State to pledge State revenues to rural paving and bridgework, and stretch the value of the State gas tax increase, that otherwise would have funded only this one, large-scale project.

Now, I would like to talk about how transportation investment can serve as a key economic stimulus to drive a recovery nationwide. A well-performing transportation network allows American families to benefit both as consumers for lower-priced goods and as workers by gaining better access to employment. It also allows businesses to manage inventories and move goods more affordably while ensuring employees can reliably get to and from work.

As Congress considers providing additional financial support to stimulate the economy and to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, I still ask you to provide funding through existing highway and transit formulas, that they provide funding in the quickest, most efficient manner, understood by our State DOTs, and provide funding to every State and locality. It is also important that Congress not attach unrealistic timelines related to the obligation of economic recovery funding, nor should such funding come with additional Federal requirements that delay obligation and expenditure of funds.

Lastly, as you consider surface reauthorization policies, know that AASHTO strongly supported the bipartisan process this committee used in the last Congress to develop the America's Surface Transportation Infrastructure Act. Based on that foundation of partnership, we believe the next bill's core policy principles should look at the following: first and

foremost, like I said earlier, timely reauthorization of long-term build. A long-term sustainable revenue solution to the Highway Trust Fund, increased and prioritized formula-based funding to States, increased flexibility, reduced program burdens, and improved project delivery and support to ensure State DOTs are able to harness innovation and technology.

Meanwhile, our State DOTs will continue addressing ongoing and emerging policy issues, such as performance and asset management, infrastructure resiliency, equity, carbon reduction, as well as broadband and other technology deployment in our highway right-of-way.

To conclude, this week hundreds of State DOT leaders from all corners are gathering virtually at AASHTO's 2021 Washington briefing. While we won't be able to visit with you in person as we normally do, AASHTO and the State DOTs will continue advocating for strong federal-State partnership to address our surface transportation investment needs.

Thank you again for the honor of being here today and the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sheehan follows:]

Senator Carper. Commissioner Sheehan, thank you very much for your testimony, and to all of our witnesses here today. It is hard to think of a better panel to begin consideration of our surface transportation bill than this panel.

I want to start off, I am going to just run through quickly the names of those who have shown up in person or virtually, In this order, myself, followed by Senator Capito, Senator Cardin, Senator Inhofe, Senator Sanders, Senator Cramer, Senator Whitehouse, Senator Lummis, Senator Stabenow, Senator Kelly, and Senator Padilla. All right, that is about nine people.

Let me just start off with a quick question for Governor Hogan. Governor Hogan, as you know, the Northeast Corridor runs from down by rail, down and about Washington D.C. all the way up to Boston. There is a stretch between Aberdeen, Maryland and Newark, Delaware, where it goes from three rails to two. There has been talk for a long time about adding a third rail between Aberdeen and Newark, Delaware, that is probably about six or seven miles.

Is this a project that you have ever heard discussed in Maryland? Is this something that people of Maryland might be willing to collaborate with Delaware and the DOT on?

Governor Hogan. Senator, I know that our Department of Transportation has had discussions, and we certainly look forward to continuing to talk with you about that possibility.

I think those bottlenecks where, we have gone through this in Maryland, we are moving forward on the Howard Street Tunnel, where we moved from where we could only do single-stack trains and it was a real bottleneck, I think, in a similar way. If you have multiple lanes going up multiple tracks going into a fewer number of tracks, it causes congestion. We think it is probably something that we would love to work with you on.

Senator Carper. All right. Thanks so much.

Question, if I could, for Governor Whitmer. Governor, reducing transportation emissions is a top priority for reauthorization. The good news is that the world is moving toward zero emission vehicles. A decade ago, the number of electric vehicles on the roads in the United States could be counted in the hundreds. Today, we are approaching 2 million, and it seems that a week doesn't go by that automakers don't announce an increase in ambition.

I mentioned General Motors' announcement that come, what, 2035, they will not be building any more gasoline or diesel-powered vehicles, but the Ford Motor Company apparently has recently announced that all of the cars that they sell in Europe will be electric by, I think, by 2030.

Yet the market forecasts predict that the EV share of new car sales in the U.S. will lag in comparison with Europe and China. I am concerned that if the U.S. lags on EV policy,

investments in manufacturing will flow to other parts of the world.

My question, Governor Whitmer, is how do we ensure that U.S. consumers are purchasing zero-emission vehicles and what are the perils of ceding our leadership here to other nations?

Governor Whitmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question, and at the risk of taking this Motown question too far, I think Dancing in the Streets by Martha Reeves and the Vandellas might be the right song for this undertaking, hopefully. That means we are successful in it.

I think you are asking a very important, thoughtful question. As we are trying to transition our economy and our consumption, address climate change, and our workforce needs as well, and do it equitably, this is an important part of the conversation. In Michigan, our economy is inextricably linked to the auto industry. The future of our mobility and our decarbonization goals all need to be woven together, so that we can tackle emissions.

We have to invest in and push for bold electric vehicle policy as a pathway to economic opportunity for our Country and a way to address climate change. These are linked; you can't pull them apart. It is not if-or; it is both-and.

We are heavily focused on building a statewide connected charging network in Michigan. We are working to help

communities and businesses transition their fleets and ensuring that we have got tools to attract and retain electric vehicle employers and to reskill our workforce. All of these are important pieces of it.

I would like to highlight just one quick thing. My State's Office of Future Mobility and Electrification, one of our efforts is called Flip Your Fleet. It is a \$3 million program aimed towards small businesses and school districts that we proposed in the Mobility Futures Initiative in my Fiscal Year 2022 Budget.

So, thinking creatively about how do we incentivize this transition, how do we upscale our workforce so that we are prepared? How do we build up the infrastructure across the State so that when you buy your EV that is American-made, that you are able to utilize it and have confidence in that? So these are all important pieces to incentivizing this investment in this American transition that I think we are going to need to partner at the federal level, at the State level, at the local level, as the Mayor was speaking to. I think these are all aspects of being successful doing that.

Senator Carper. Governor, it is encouraging to hear you tell us of the leading role that the State of Michigan is playing toward beginning to create this corridor of charging stations and fueling stations. Senator Kelly is a retired Navy

captain, a pilot, astronaut, and he knows we have a saying in the Navy, all hands on deck. When it comes to creating these corridors of charging stations and fueling stations, it really is all hands on deck. It is just not all on the Federal Government; it is not all on the State and local governments; it is not all on State Departments of Transportation. It is not all on the convenience stores of the world, the Wawas, it is a burden that we all carry, but it is an opportunity that we all share.

All right, thanks. Thank you, Governor, and next, we will turn to my colleague.

Senator Capito. Thank you all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question is to Governor Hogan, our neighbor to the north of West Virginia. Your western part of Maryland is, we often say, is just West Virginia again, or maybe you would say maybe our part of our State is Western Maryland, but we are very much tied to one another. I know that is where you have your Appalachian Development Highway System that Senator Cardin talked about. We have been working together.

My question, really, is aimed at, because you have talked about the congestion in Baltimore. You have massive transportation challenges in your more populated area, but then as you move to Western Maryland, you have the rural areas. What do you see in terms of being able to meet the transportation,

that we need to put in this bill to make sure that you, as the Governor, have the ability to meet the transportation needs of both your rural and urban areas?

I do want to thank you for mentioning the One Federal Decision. We thought that was a very good part of the last bill that we passed, and we hope to incorporate it into this one. So Governor Hogan, could you talk about the rural-urban flexibilities that you may need?

Governor Hogan. Sure. Thank you very much, Senator. It is great to have you as a neighbor.

I think you are absolutely right. I think the flexibility is something that I think we agree on, that the States need to have that ability to be flexible. But it is also really important that we balance, that we address issues in both our rural and our urban and suburban communities. That is what I mentioned earlier, what we have tried to do in a very balanced plan by moving forward on every priority project in every one of our jurisdictions, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore.

We have done some really big projects in the urban areas, but some really important projects in all of our rural areas, as well. I think it is critical that we come up with a certainty of a funding formula that gives us flexibility on surface transportation dollars, rather than some prescriptive regs regarding exactly how we have to use. I think new discretionary

grant programs that could be awarded to a few other entities.

But we look forward to working with you. There is no question we have to find a balance, and going back to my comments earlier about getting a bipartisan bill, I think if we want to get everybody on board, we have got to address the transportation and infrastructure needs of all the States and all the communities across the Country.

Senator Capito. Let me just, as a point of clarification here, in terms of the formula funding that is built into all of these bills that, as we have moved along the five- or six-year increments, we have, from time to time, earmarked certain parts of that formula for certain, specific types of projects, like transportation enhancement projects, and others.

Is basically what you are saying, don't take away from the formula money where you have the greatest flexibility as the governor to create new discretionary programs that might take from your ability to be able to make those decisions at the State, local, and municipal level?

Governor Hogan. That is exactly right, Senator. We agree with that, and it is hard with the discretionary funding, it is hard to make long-term planning decisions. These transportation projects happen over a long number of years, and for us, to really plan for all the improvements we want to make, to have some type of certainty is better, having flexibility to do what

we want. But a reliability and a certainty of the funding formula is something that the governors would prefer.

Senator Capito. Thank you.

Commissioner Sheehan, you mentioned in your statement about the failure to act. If we fail to act, what consequences, or if we do another short-term, could you expound on that a little bit on our failure to get to a lengthy bill, a very robust, lengthy bill, as opposed to kicking the can down the road for another year? What impact does that have on you as a State commissioner, and all States?

Ms. Sheehan. Thank you for that question, Senator. As transportation professionals, we work closely with communities to understand what their transportation needs are, and then we set forth and develop either five-year or ten-year transportation plans.

You make some assumptions around what federal funding will be available. In the case of New Hampshire, for our ten-year plan, we assumed level federal funding into the future. That is so that we can prepare the projects and have them ready to access dollars when you make them available. Any interaction in the federal program means that we lose an entire construction season potentially, if we are dealing with short-term extensions and having to really meter the projects that we advertise and move into construction.

It is very concerning for the State DOT that directly impacts State and local governments, as well as all of the contractors and vendors that we do business with. They are staffing up and preparing to bid on all of the work that they see us advancing through our advertising programs. When we don't have the financial resources, it is devastating to those sectors of our economy as well.

Senator Capito. All right, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Senator Capito.

Senator Cardin?

Senator Cardin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank all of our witnesses for their presentation.

I want to follow up on Senator Capito's point dealing with the topic of our hearing, building back better, investing in transportation, fostering economic growth. So, if I could, Governor Hogan, start first about your thoughts about how we can tailor this transportation program to deal with challenges in our urban center.

I specifically mentioned Baltimore City. I am aware of one major transportation request we have in for Baltimore City in regards to the I-95 exit for Port Covington. But it seems to me that, in many respects, it is more challenging to use public-private partnerships in urban centers. For a city like

Baltimore that really doesn't have a rapid-rail transit system and has two lines, but not a system, transit development has become more challenging.

So, as we look at reauthorizing a transportation program, do you have thoughts as to how we can make it more attractive for transportation to assist economic growth in cities like Baltimore?

Governor Hogan. Thank you, Senator. Yes, I do think that we have to focus on looking at every mode of transportation. I am a big believer in a balanced transportation system. We have invested \$14 billion in transit in both the Baltimore and Washington region, and we re-did the entire bus system in Baltimore, hundreds of millions of dollars. We run the transportation system for Baltimore City.

There is no question that, I mentioned earlier that we did a P3 on the Purple Line and the Washington suburbs. You could do the same thing in Baltimore. But the previous plan was just one line that didn't really provide any kind of a system. But you have to make it attractive to the private sector. We would have to have the flexibility of funding.

But we have invested money to save the Washington Metro System, to build the Purple Line, and to re-do the transit system in Baltimore. But there is no question that as we try to come out of this pandemic, and we head into economic recovery,

particularly in some of our urban areas, investment in infrastructure can help us create more jobs. Just on the road project in Metropolitan Washington, on the Capital Beltway and fixing the bridge, that is going to provide 11,000 jobs for every billion dollars invested in that project, and it is going to be about a \$10 billion project.

So there is no question that this is going to be a big part of our economic recovery, and it is why we have got a number of our labor groups that are just as excited as some of the business entities and the State and local governments.

Senator Cardin. There is no question we have an aggressive program for the Washington area dealing with both transit and roads. I find Baltimore has challenges that have not yet been met. So I would just welcome your thoughts as we go through the process as to what incentives we can put into a transportation reauthorization that makes it easier for urban centers themselves, not necessarily suburban areas, but the centers themselves to be able to attract economic growth.

Mayor Hancock, I would like to ask you a question, following up on Senator Capito. I am the author of the Transportation Alternative Program. It gives flexibility on the use of transportation funds for local government units, so that they can deal with their needs and have some ability to deal with paths, bike paths, bike safety, tourism-type transportation

needs, et cetera.

Can you just tell me, how important it is for a mayor of a major city to have some flexibility on the use of transportation money coming from the Federal Government and not have to solely rely upon the allocation and partnership with the State?

Mayor Hancock. Senator, your questioning is so on-target with what most mayors across this Country are dealing with and are asking for with regard to our plan, from the U.S. Conference of Mayors to the United States Congress and to the Biden Administration.

Local governments have the ability to be much more nimble with their ability to address the challenges facing their residents. Here is the reality: 80 percent of all the roads that we as citizens travel on, are sitting in front of our homes. They are sitting in front of our small businesses. It is the road that we use to get to work every day.

Yet, we are only seeing a small portion of the resources that are coming to our States to, particularly, our metro-urban centers. You mentioned Baltimore. Denver is not much different, as well as the other large, metropolitan areas in the State of Colorado, namely down south in Colorado Springs and here in the metro Denver area.

We could take those resources and create the multi-modal role that we feel we need to do and address the issues around

equity and again, climate change, that we put forth as priorities. If we have greater flexibility and more resources directed to city governments, I think you will see us move much more efficiently to address the overwhelming infrastructure challenges that face, again, 80 percent of the roads that our people are travelling on every day.

Let me just mention this. Post-pandemic is going to mean that we are going to have a different work culture in this Country. We believe that most people are going to have a rotational basis of working remotely and then in person. You are going to see small businesses who have been disproportionately harmed working to try to come back and recover as quickly as possible.

I think the faster, more efficient way for us to address the roads will help everybody get to a better state of recovery in the next economy, and that is going to be critically important. We won't have time, as the Ranking Member talked about, bogging down municipalities in bureaucracy and having this intermediary, or the State, again, playing a role.

Although the State, and I am going to say, the States have been great partners. But we can move much more efficiently and be more nimble and accountable in moving forward with these road improvements that we have to have, be more multi-modal, and again, addressing the issues of climate, equity, and improvement

on a much more fast-track basis.

Senator Cardin. Thank you very much.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Mayor, and thank you, Senator Cardin.

Now, another former mayor, and a mayor of Tulsa, if I am not mistaken, who has led this committee, led the Armed Services Committee, and knows a thing or two, having authored major legislation for years on transportation.

Senator Inhofe. It is been a joy working with a lot of the people who have, Ben is leaving right now, and the rest of us here. This is what we are supposed to be doing, the two most important things are defending America and infrastructure. At least, that is what I have always believed.

Real quickly, I have a couple of UCs I want to propose at this time. One would be, I wrote an op-ed piece in the Washington Times this morning having to do with the bipartisan necessity that we are going to be dealing with right now to have a successful bill, and I ask unanimous consent that it be made a part of the record.

Senator Carper. Without objection.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Inhofe. I have a second one, it is a letter submitted by the National Association of Truck Stop Operators stressing the urgency for Senators to protect the ban on commercializing interstate rest areas. It is kind of the old-fashioned idea that the private sector does things better than the public sector does. I would ask unanimous consent.

Senator Carper. Without objection.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Inhofe. All right. The second thing, we have done some really good work on this committee. In the last Congress, we tackled something that had not been successfully addressed before, and that was on streamlining, not talking about it, but actually streamlining it.

We had a committee report, a bipartisan highway bill with the needed streamlining provisions, including codifying the One Federal Decision process. Governor Hogan, you come from a perspective of not just your own personal experience, but also chairing the National Governor's Association. People are talking about it now, some people who are not on this committee, but individuals, saying that we have already done the streamlining, we did that last year, and we don't need to do any more.

So I would like to ask you, how do you respond to that, and how do project delivery delays affect the investments that are made by the States and the Federal Government? Governor Hogan?

Governor Hogan. Thank you very much, Senator. First of all, let me again agree with you on the importance for reaching a bipartisan solution to this. If we can't reach a bipartisan solution on something like infrastructure that everybody agrees is a priority, then it is going to be difficult to do that on anything else.

But you are right. Enhancing efficiency and eliminating

red tape, making the process go smoother, cutting the time frames down will be very important to continue to make progress on. There was some progress made, but it is still much too long, much too confusing of a process that adds cost. It adds timeframes. Time is money. We don't get these projects moving forward, we are not solving the infrastructure needs, the transportation problems.

It is also costing taxpayers a lot more money because of the delays, and when we are dealing with private sector investment, which we are doing a lot of, taking some of the risk out of the process by having some certainty about how long it is going to happen, I think is important.

I mentioned earlier about how the One Federal Decision policy should be codified. We should establish a two-year goal for completion of environmental projects and a 90-day timeline for related project authorizations. At the beginning of the discussion, somebody was talking about the seven-year timeframe that it takes to go through the environmental process.

We all want to make sure that we very carefully ensure the safety of our environment, and we go through, and not skip any steps. But we have to speed up, do things simultaneously, concurrently, and speed the process somehow. It is going to mean a lot to doing more projects, putting more people to work, and making improvements to all these different things.

Senator Inhofe. I appreciate that very much. I think it is significant too that we keep in mind, well, first of all, I have never seen a five-year program that can't be done in one year, and we demonstrated that real clearly, I think, in the last two bills that we had, and we are on the right road there.

Also, you brought up this idea of prioritizing. I think that we have done a really good job in Oklahoma. We were prioritizing prior to the last two bills that we had, Oklahoma had been, a lot of people don't know that they rank us in terms of the conditions of our bridges, and we were number 49 in the Country on the condition of our bridges. As a result of the efforts that we did, we now are number nine. We have gone all the way from 49 to number 9 in the condition of our bridges. We have some 1,600 bridges in the State of Oklahoma.

So I think that the important thing here, and I would ask you to respond to this also, both Governors, the significance of having the States be the movers of the priorities. A lot of times, people would rather let the Federal Government do that, so States should determine the priority of surface transportation within their boundaries. What do you think?

Governor Hogan. I agree with you. I agree with you, Senator, and we even do that at the State level. We get input from each of the local governments on what their priorities are, and then as a State, we try to take those priority

considerations in as we are putting together our State transportation plan.

But it is the same way. Senator Cardin can tell you, when we meet with our federal delegation, we lay out, these are the priorities of our State, and we are the ones on the ground that can make those decisions, get more input. Obviously, we want to work together with our federal partners, but the States can help prioritize. There is no question about that. There is a lot of need, and we can't do everything at the same time. We want to make sure that we all agree on the priorities.

Senator Inhofe. My time has expired, but I will ask, for the record, that you send something to us, Ms. Sheehan, about your workforce development thing. We have been very active on this, not just in roads and highways. We have provisions in the FAA bill. If you could, for the record, send us something as to what we could do, Congress, to help in that area of workforce development. Okay?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Senator Inhofe. Another former mayor, not only is Senator Sanders is a former mayor, but he was mayor of Burlington, he was a congressman, and now a Senator. He ran for president a couple times, and he is in the on-deck circle.

He is joining us by Webex today. Senator Sanders, you are

recognized, if you are able to hear us.

Senator Sanders. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of our panelists who are with us.

I don't know if I have anything profound to offer that hasn't been said already. What I can tell you is that in a rural State like Vermont, we are struggling big-time with crumbling roads and bridges. We waste a lot of money just trying to rebuild rather than maintain our roads, which is just throwing good money after bad.

And as everybody has said, we have the potential now as we rebuild our roads and our bridges, our water systems, our wastewater plants, our public transportation. We are behind many other countries around the world in terms of rail, and we are also focusing on climate change, the need to transform our energy system, which means, among other things, a whole lot of charging stations throughout rural America. As we do all of those things, we can create millions of good-paying jobs, make our economy far more efficient, save lives, have safer transportation.

Mr. Chairman, all that I wanted to say is count me in. This is a problem impacting urban America, but it is also a problem impacting rural America. And I do say this in a very divided political climate in this Country. I think we can come together, at least on this issue. Whether you are a Republican

governor or a Democratic governor, you have problems with your infrastructure. So let's go forward together, create the jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, and do the right thing for the American people.

Senator Carper. Senator Sanders, thank you very, very much for that message, and for joining us today.

Next, Senator Cramer, you are up. I have to return a phone call; I will be right back. In the meantime, Senator Capito, you are in charge.

Senator Cramer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Capito. Thank both of you for your leadership on this important issue, both in the last Congress and now in this one.

I thank all of the witnesses for your expert testimony and your thoughtfulness today, and for being with us today.

Commissioner Sheehan, I don't know if you know North Dakota's commissioner, but we feel really blessed in North Dakota to have lured away from the mountains of Wyoming to the prairies of North Dakota Bill Panos, who is doing a great job. Every discussion I have with Bill, he of course, brings up an issue that has been alluded to a number of times today, and that is, of course, the formula.

But North Dakota, being very rural, much like Wyoming, much like parts of some of these States that we are talking about today, I think every State has some part of it that is rural,

but North Dakota is very rural.

Could you elaborate a little bit on the importance, Commissioner, of the formula remaining the way it is, why it is so important for the entire system to maintain this formula?

Ms. Sheehan. Thank you for that question, Senator, and yes, I know the head of the DOT in North Dakota, Bill Panos, well. He is one of my colleagues at AASHTO.

The reason that States advocate strongly for formula funding is that it provides predictability into the future. As we advance our projects, we want to have certainty that the commitment that we are making to municipalities and counties, we can truly deliver on.

In rural areas in particular, those formula dollars are being used each and every day to make lasting improvements in infrastructure, whether that is replacing deficient bridges, working to improve pavement condition, making safety improvements, or ensuring that our infrastructure is resilient to an increase in future extreme weather. So we as State DOTs continue to emphasize the need for that traditional funding.

While in addition, you might look at increasing some of the other programs that could benefit communities more directly, we would not want to see those efforts move forward at the expense of the core program.

Senator Cramer. Thank you for that. So, along the lines

of funding, obviously, a lot of the discussion that takes place here deals with the funding, and there is never enough to do all the things we should do.

However, on the issues today, I think what the Commissioner of AASHTO has advocated for is a sustainable funding source, so the Highway Trust Fund obviously being the main source for infrastructure development and surface transportation development. You have advocated for the sustainability of that.

Yet, Governor Whitmer is understandably and appropriately proud of the work that the manufacturing sector is doing in creating more electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles. Of course, that ambition for that type of a climate response and a sustainable formula or revenue stream obviously intersect and conflict at some point.

Could I ask each of you, Governor Whitmer and Commissioner Sheehan, to talk about what a future funding source would look like in terms of the revenue stream, please? Maybe Governor Whitmer, first.

Governor Whitmer. I will start. Thank you, Senator, for that question. I appreciate it.

I knew that, eventually, this conversation would go to this part, and I know that is also the hard, tough job that you all have ahead of you. I know it is a long-debated question, and I am talking about the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund and how

to pay for needed transportation investments. I am not here to answer the question on the federal gas tax. I can only speak from what I know.

After decades of under-investment in Michigan, the people of my State elected me. One of my big tasks that I heard all across the State in all 83 counties was to fix the damn roads. My team and I looked at all the options as we came in to improve the funding outlook in Michigan. There is no question: we need a predictable, sustainable, and sufficient solution. That is the best-case scenario.

When I took my solution to the legislature, we couldn't find common ground, and so I had to pivot and do bonding. Because we know that doing nothing is not an option. As you know, festering infrastructure problems get harder to tackle and get more expensive. So I know that you are going to have this debate about how we prioritize this and make this a reality. I look forward to that debate and I am happy to share any thoughts that we have from the ground of how we can improve the tenor and the substance of that debate.

Senator Cramer. Thank you. Commissioner Sheehan, do you have some thoughts?

Ms. Sheehan. Senator, thank you for the question.

I, too, don't envy you the challenging work that you have ahead of you to identify a sustainable source of revenue for the

Highway Trust Fund. We are having similar conversations at the State level, and our State legislature is hesitant to move toward a new source of revenue without understanding what direction the Federal Government might move in.

But what I do know is that since the last gas tax increase, our cost of doing business has continued to increase, and we have lost buying power over the last 28 years. So we truly appreciate the efforts of the Congress to identify a sustainable solution.

When the Highway Trust Fund receipts have not kept pace with the investments that we need to make, the fact that there has been other sources of revenue needed available so that we can continue our programs, that is extremely important to States, and we appreciate that continued support for transportation investment.

Senator Cramer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Senator Cramer.

Senator Whitehouse is joining us by Webex. Sheldon, if you are out there somewhere, please join us. You are recognized.

Senator Whitehouse. Yes, I am, and thank you. I am delighted to have this terrific panel of witnesses.

I wanted to talk first about coastal infrastructure. Governor Whitmer, Michigan counts, because the way we define coastal includes our Great Lakes. It is estimated that coastal

communities are going to need to invest more than \$400 billion in the next 20 years. That is based on our present, very conservative and probably inadequate estimates of the damage that climate change portends through sea level rise and extreme weather.

This is a new and very alarming demand for these local communities. As we look around at the places for support for coastal communities, we look at things, particularly in this committee, like the Army Corps of Engineers Flood and Coastal Damage Reduction Fund. What we see in the last decade is that in our best year, \$19 went inland for every single dollar that went to coasts. That was our best year in the last decade. In our worst year, \$120 went inland for every single dollar that went to coasts.

Everybody is familiar with the Land and Water Conservation Fund. That has a less egregious, but similar bias toward inland and upland projects over coastal projects. CoreLogic has done its 2020 storm surge report, and it estimates that over 7 million single-family homes are at risk of storm surge in the U.S., and that the cost to rebuild those homes would exceed \$1.7 trillion.

So we have a big coastal problem on our hands. It is a coastal problem that we are ignoring. The Chairman comes from a State that is similar in size to Rhode Island and has even lower

topography. So Delaware and Rhode Island share a very strong concern about these issues.

We were able to get into the last highway bill that came out of our committee unanimously some very good work on coastal infrastructure. Because it is not just going to be homes that are flooded, it is also going to be infrastructure. When infrastructure goes, you can also lose homes and access to emergency services to homes. So it is a big problem.

I would like to ask the Governors to comment on what they see as the needs in their States to protect coasts. I think Maryland is more immediately affected, because of the oceans problem. But Michigan and the Great Lakes have their own issues, as well.

Governor Hogan. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator. Thanks for raising the issue.

A lot of the discussion around climate change is about mitigation and about clean air, and not enough, I think, discussion about how we mitigate some of the problems that are going to come by flooding, and as you just touched on very eloquently, the coastal flooding issue.

We did touch on this, and a lot of our focus was on transportation infrastructure during the NGA Initiative. But we did talk about resiliency, and trying to address some of these issues in our State, along with what Governor Whitmer said

earlier.

But we have made great strides with respect to climate change. We have cleaner air standards than 49 other States, we put tax credits in for electric vehicles and charging stations, and are taking a lot of actions on mass transit to get people off the roads.

But this is one we have invested some dollars in. But you are right, there has been not enough funding. It is something we do have to address as you are looking at infrastructure. Not just coastal flooding, but further upstream, the flooding is going to occur as well. As a small coastal State adjacent to the Chairman's State of Delaware, it is obviously an issue and a concern for us with the Chesapeake Bay, which is one of America's greatest natural resources. It is an issue that we deal with, and I will pass it on to my colleague to weigh in. But it is an important issue we have to address.

Governor Whitmer. Yes, thanks, Governor Hogan, and Senator Whitehouse, thank you so much for the question. I think that it is really important.

I am glad that you highlighted the coastline in Michigan. We have 3,200 miles of coastline in Michigan, all fresh water. Twenty-one percent of the world's fresh water is in and around the Great Lakes. So this is something that we take very seriously, and we have seen the impact of climate change.

We need to address this through resilient infrastructure. High water levels have eroded our shoreline and washed away roadways, and we have had devastating flooding in communities that have forced evacuations. We had to evacuate 10,000 people in Midland, Michigan. That wasn't along the Great Lakes, but it was just another example of the need for resilient infrastructure, because it washed out a number of dams and bridges when that 500-year flooding event happened.

So whether it is in Texas or it is in the freshwater coastline of Michigan, or along the Nation's borders all across the Country, this is something that is of critical importance. When we see high water levels that are eroding our shorelines, they are impacting everything from our drinking water to just our ability to conduct life and be safe in doing that.

So we have a lot of needs in this area. But there is no question that resilient infrastructure along the coastlines is an important part of the overarching problem that we are hopeful that you will help us address.

Senator Whitehouse. Mr. Chairman, I am probably close to out of time, if not completely out of time. So let me just let Governor Whitmer know that, as the fix the damn roads governor and as the auto governor with GM having made these commitments to going to all electric vehicles, we have in the bill that we passed significant support for electronic vehicle charging

infrastructure. We are eagerly trying to get tax support for electronic vehicle charging infrastructure.

As you know, it is going to be a very bad thing for GM if they commit to electric vehicles and we haven't built the infrastructure to charge those electric vehicles. So we are on the case, but we need your help and the help of our Republican colleagues to make sure that that all gets done aggressively and energetically.

Governor Whitmer. Thank you.

Senator Carper. All right.

Senator Whitehouse, something you just said reminds me of a conversation I had with one Senator Stabenow's constituents, Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors. We were talking a year ago about what it was going to take to convince consumers of this Country to buy electric-powered vehicles and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

She said, with respect to EV, she said we need three things to convince our customers to them if we are going to build them. She said, the first thing we need is a 300-mile range on a charge; we have that now. The second thing we need is charging stations across the Country corridors, both for electric and hydrogen vehicles. The last thing she said that we needed is the technology to enable them to charge batteries in minutes, not hours. Luckily, we are knocking on those doors. The one

thing that we really need is number two, to your point, Sheldon.

Senator Whitehouse. Mr. Chairman, I am driving one, and anybody who has had the pleasure of driving an electric vehicle knows what a thrilling experience it is.

Senator Carper. Yes, they are fun. They are a lot of fun. Our States may be small, Sheldon, but we punch above our weight. There you go.

All right, I think Senator Lummis is next. Welcome aboard.

Senator Lummis. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member.

I really appreciate this topic. It is so important to my State of Wyoming.

My first question is for Mayor Hancock and for Victoria Sheehan. Thank you both for being here. Greetings, Mayor, I am from your State to the north, Wyoming, and spend a lot of time in your beautiful community.

My question for both of you is related to Senator Cramer's question earlier. He asked about the importance of the formula. My question is about the flexibilities within the formula fund. How important are the flexibilities in formula funds to ensure the very needs of States can be met with federal dollars, given how very different the needs are of our States and our communities?

Mayor Hancock. Senator Lummis, first of all, as we love to

say here, between Colorado and Wyoming, we forget the boundaries, so we consider you family. So it is an honor to meet you, at least virtually.

I appreciate your question, because I think you get to the heart of the real opportunity before all of us as we try to think about what the future investments around transportation and infrastructure looks like, how we address the looming challenges of climate and equity going forward. Cities, in particular, have to have flexibility because we better understand the nuances of our communities, and really, the challenges that so many in our community face.

I often say, when I talk about transportation mobility, if you want to know where poverty exists, show me where the least number of options around mobility exist, and I will show you poverty. That is true no matter where you are in this Country, rural or urban, suburban, doesn't matter.

The reality of this is that we have got to be able to adjust to the flexibilities. That is why as mayors, we have proposed utilizing some of the tools within the Federal Government, working with our States and municipalities today, whether they are STBG or the CBG, or even renewal of the Energy Efficiency Block Grant, so that we can be much more facilitative and flexible in addressing the challenges we face.

So many of our communities have been perennially overlooked

and underserved. We get a chance to provide those ladders of opportunity, grant multi-modal options to those communities to make sure that we are able to create connectivity and to create affordable housing, good schools, access to good healthcare, and particular transportation corridors and to lift them, give them an opportunity to be lifted out of poverty.

So the flexibility within the formula is critical. And I am glad you added on that. It shows a great deal of insight, coming from a Wyoming Cowboy, or Cowgirl.

Senator Lummis. Thanks, Mayor, and thank you, Ms. Sheehan. On behalf of AASHTO, would you make some remarks on that same subject?

Ms. Sheehan. Thank you, Senator.

So, as State DOTs, we are advancing projects that fulfill numerous goals, and that is why flexibility is so critical. For example, if we are replacing a bridge that is structurally deficient, we need to be replacing that bridge with a longer structure that is more resilient and can handle an increase in storm frequency.

We also may be widening, not to increase capacity, but to provide more amenities for active transportation, whether that is sidewalks or bike lanes or wider shoulders, depending on that unique situation.

So as we advance the project, the flexibility is critical,

because none of our projects fit nicely into one category. We are trying to work with communities, understand what their needs are. We talk to them about what a successful project looks like for them and incorporate all of those different aspects into the projects that we do. Flexibility of the funding allows us to be nimble and make sure that we are not just doing one type of project one way, that we can truly partner with communities and meet their needs, as well as the regional transportation needs that the State is focused on.

Senator Lummis. Thank you so much. With the little bit of time remaining, I would ask our Governors to respond, perhaps, in the context of the next questioner, to the issue of the permitting processes. Are there opportunities to improve the federal permitting processes to expedite completing infrastructure projects?

You don't have sufficient time within my five minutes to respond. So I will just thank you, Governor Whitmer and Governor Hogan, for participating in this hearing and for your work on behalf of your States. Having come out of State government, I am deeply appreciative of the work that governors do, and thank you very much, all four of you, for participating in this hearing today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Senator Carper. Senator, thank you. I would ask our

governors to just respond to Senator Lummis's question for the record and share that with all of us, please. Senator Lummis was State treasurer at one time, right?

Senator Lummis. Correct.

Senator Carper. I think you came close to running for governor, maybe did run for governor. Did you?

Senator Lummis. Well, I came close. I did serve as general counsel to our governor once upon a time, and our current governor, you know, I suspect, and worked within the National Governor's Association. Great guy, and I salute governors for their hard work, especially during COVID. This has been extremely challenging for all of you. Thank you for your leadership.

Senator Carper. I will just mention, between all of us, we have got some extraordinary backgrounds in terms of experience, levels of experience in different kinds of jobs that our members have held, and it is something we can take full advantage of.

Next is Senator Merkley, who used to be my seatmate on the Senate Floor. He left me about two weeks ago, but he is still on our side. He is sitting about 20 feet away now.

Jeff, you are recognized. I think you are on Webex, and I think after you, Senator Markey. And after Senator Markey, it would be Senator Duckworth, Senator Stabenow, and maybe Senator Kelly before Senator Stabenow, I think. We will figure out how

to do that, but Senator Merkley, you are up. Thank you.

Senator Merkley. Sure, Chair Carper. Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to join you all.

I wanted to start with a question to Mayor Hancock. I know that Denver last year enacted its EV action plan, which addressed in part charging infrastructure. I think part of the strategy was to create more charging infrastructure in underserved communities. Maybe you could just share what the goal was, and what you have learned in the last few months, what challenges you see ahead.

Mayor Hancock. Thank you, Senator, and I appreciate your question.

The EV Action Plan was about, exactly as you are alluding to, the proliferation of charging stations around the city, with particular focus on communities to bridge the challenges around equity. We did a couple things. One, we changed our zoning code so any new buildings and housing units would have charging stations available to them, or at least a charging infrastructure would be available for the creation of that.

But we also, the city started looking at our public facilities, our parks, our recreation centers, that we own and begin the process of funding installation of charging stations. We have it already at our airport, for example. But these facilities that are much more readily available to underserved

communities would be available to them as well, as well as some of our meter stations. Our meter locations around downtown Denver or wherever meters are located, we would also have some charging stations available to that.

So, we began, in the last 18 months to two years, began the process of rolling out that infrastructure, making appropriate investments. We are really beginning the process of ramping up more of that, but we are making progress under that. I can get back to you in terms of the actual movement toward the particular goal. We will make sure we get that to you from our staff.

But I am pleased with where we are, and the fact that we have laid the foundations for new builds to make sure that that is available to them.

Senator Merkley. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mayor. I see it as one of those plans that advances climate by encouraging movement to electric vehicles, but it also helps address environmental and economic justice. So I look forward to more information.

Speaking of economic justice, I wanted to turn to Biden's pledge to ensure that 40 percent of the benefits from the infrastructure package are put forth to disadvantaged communities, communities that have been disinvested in. Mayor Hancock, do you support Biden's 40 percent pledge?

Mayor Hancock. I do, and I think if you look more closely at a lot of that, on a local level, a lot of the cities are already focused on doing exactly that.

We have in Denver a new equity strategy. I opened up a new Office of Equitable Innovation and Sustainability to make sure that we are advancing the goals of equity in everything that we do, including our contracting. Of course, we must do disparity studies to demonstrate the underserved and the underutilization, but we are absolutely committed, and I think President Biden's is goal right on target.

Senator Merkley. Thank you. I wanted to ask the same question of our other colleagues, but to just get a very short response, so I can move forward to another question. Governor Whitmer, do you also support the 40 percent dedication to disadvantaged communities?

Governor Whitmer. I do think that it is important that we have equity built into all of these policies. What we have seen in transition is that that hasn't always been the case, and communities have been left behind. So this is something that I think is crucial in our deliberations and should be embedded in the policy work that comes out on this front, and frankly, many others.

Senator Merkley. Of course, part of the goal is sometimes it is easy in theory, but it is hard in practice, because those

same communities may have less political power, which is why the 40 percent is there. It is not just a commitment to the ideal, but to the, well, let's actually make it happen.

Governor Hogan, do you support that same 40 percent fraction?

Governor Hogan. Well, in our State, I think that way more than 50 percent of our transportation investment goes into disadvantaged communities and minority equity types of issues, because we are mostly focused on the urban areas and the areas that immediately surround them.

I haven't seen President Biden's proposal yet, frankly, but tomorrow, both the Secretary of Transportation and the President will be joining all of the Nation's governors. We look forward to hearing more details about their plans with respect to transportation.

Senator Merkley. Governor, one of the reasons I felt this was important to raise is because I was in D.C. when the Metro system was built. Anacostia was left out because it was the black neighborhood that had little political power. So the Green Line didn't get built for forever. Then similarly in Maryland, the Red Line has the same national reputation as a line that was planned to connect low-income black neighborhoods with few jobs to job centers, and to also develop transit and development in those disinvested black neighborhoods, and to

improve the air quality was bad because of the amount of traffic congestion and associated pollution.

But that is a project you chose to cancel and put the funds instead in predominantly white communities. So would a 40 percent pledge like this help fund projects, make sure projects like the Red Line in Baltimore actually happen to serve such disinvested communities?

Governor Hogan. Senator, I would totally disagree with your assertion for a number of reasons, but we don't have time to debate that here this morning.

The Red Line, according to the Washington Post editorial board, never made any economic or transportation sense. Our Transportation Department recommended against it. But we did move forward on the Purple Line, which goes through Prince George's County. It is 16 stops in minority communities and ties into the Metro system, which I came up with a funding stream to try to keep functioning when there wasn't enough federal investment.

Senator Merkley. We are out of time.

Senator Carper. Thanks for those questions, Senator Merkley, and for the responses as well. Senator Markey, you are up, my friend.

Senator Markey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, and thank you to our great panel which is joining us today.

We are obviously at a crossroads in terms of our relationship with greenhouse gases and the impact they have upon minority communities, communities of color, historically disadvantaged communities, and the role the United States must play in finding solutions and exporting those solutions around the rest of the planet.

So that is why this hearing is so important. Obviously, governors play a huge role, mayors play a huge role in helping to set the course for where we have to go.

We have to think big; we have to act big. We are running out of time to deal with the climate change crisis, and the transportation sector is an essential part of the solutions.

I have introduced a bill called the Green Streets Act with Senator Carper and other members of the committee. That bill would require very strong standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in vehicle miles traveled for transportation planning and projects.

I am also introducing today the Freezer Trucks Act to help replace diesel-powered refrigerated trucks with cleaner, electric versions in overburdened communities as well. In Chelsea, Massachusetts, which is our poorest community, we have diesel trucks just idling all day long near the most vulnerable communities that already have the highest levels of asthma and the highest levels of coronavirus because of obvious preexisting

vulnerability, because they are both lung diseases.

So, Governor Whitmer, can you talk about the future, as you see it, of the new announcement by General Motors and other motor companies to move to 100 percent electric vehicles by 2035, what that might mean in terms of this partnership that we can have with the States to ensure that we telescope the timeframe to reach a day where we have a new fleet, jobs are being created by the millions, and at the same time, we are making sure that those who are most vulnerable are being protected?

Governor Whitmer. Absolutely, Senator Markey. It is good to see you, and I appreciate the question. I am going to have to pre-apologize, this will have to be my last question. I have to give my press conference on our updates about what is happening in the State. So I am glad for an opportunity to answer this question now.

Last year, I created the Council on Future Mobility and Electrification, and it was intentional to bring diverse stakeholders together to help build a mobility strategy for Michigan and help identify where opportunities for growth and improvement are. With those stakeholders, we are working to build an electric vehicle charging network that connects the entire State by 2030, and hopefully connect with other networks across the Midwest.

I can tell you, I was in a call last night with a number of my colleagues in the Midwest, and we are thinking about ways that we can collaborate. This moment has brought us together in ways we couldn't have imagined, but there are opportunities out of this that we are already talking about. Significant investments in our electric grid, renewable energy, and charging infrastructure to ensure reliability and drive the market for EVs, to address issues like range anxiety, as we talked about earlier in this hearing.

Over the past two years, between State and local governments, our utility providers, our auto manufacturers, we have invested millions in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which is really important, and we have some of the most in the Midwest.

In addition to this though, we have to lead by example and increase the number of electric vehicles in our State and federally controlled fleets. Tax incentives should be reviewed, I believe, to be more useful for commercial fleet owners, as fleets represent the greatest near-term commercial opportunity for large-scale deployment of electric vehicles.

Then building up a network of publicly available charging stations that are capable of serving medium and heavy-duty vehicles. To your idling comment, I think that is particularly important.

My State is looking to take a lead in doing a lot of this here in the Midwest. But certainly, this is something that is important for our entire Nation.

The program that we have developed is looking to take applications for partnerships, build recharging infrastructure grant program. With our new Office of Future Mobility and Electrification, with our Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, we are working alongside industry partners, and that is, I think, really important. As we tackle this problem, we have much greater odds of success if we are bringing in partners from all different spaces to solve this problem, and it will be good for the job front, it will be good for the climate problems that we are having, and good for our economy.

Senator Markey. Thank you, Governor. I do believe that Michigan, in a lot of ways, is going to be at the center of leadership. Thank you for your great work and your vision on these issues.

We can begin to create millions. We can save all of creation while engaging in massive job creation in the automotive sector and the sectors of our economy. It is just important for us to continue to deliver that message that this is a job creation moment and at the UAW, the auto industry is signing up, and that is something that we have to focus on. We have to focus on the freezer trucks, diesel fuels, others that

don't oftentimes get to be a part of this conversation, which necessarily have to be if we are going to solve the whole problem.

Thank you so much, Governor, for your great work.

Governor Whitmer. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Carper. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Markey. Has my time expired?

Senator Carper. It is more than expired.

Senator Markey. Okay. Thank you, sir.

Senator Carper. Thank you.

Governor Whitmer, thanks so much for being a part of our panel today. This is a terrific panel. We have a couple more of our colleagues who have questions to ask, and we appreciate the other three panelists staying on board.

Governor Whitmer, I would just say that when the baseball team has the worst record in baseball, they get the top draft choices, and hope springs eternal for our Tigers. They have got some great young arms, and I look forward to maybe seeing a game with you and Debbie and Gary someday soon.

Governor Whitmer. Let's do it.

Senator Carper. Thanks so much for joining us.

Governor Whitmer. Thank you.

Senator Carper. Next, we have Senator Duckworth, and after Senator Duckworth, Senator Stabenow, and then Senator Kelley,

and maybe some words from Senator Capito to wrap it up, and we are going to work Lindsey Graham into this, somehow. All right

Senator Duckworth. Thank you, Chairman Carper. Can you hear me?

Senator Carper. Yes, you are fine. Just fine.

Senator Duckworth. Wonderful. I appreciate your leadership in making sure our committee's top priority is passing a comprehensive infrastructure package that rebuilds our roads, rail, and transit systems.

Of course, if we are truly to build back better, in Congress, we need to do a lot more work. We need to also prioritize drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in any proposal. After all, there is one fact of life that ties all of us together, the absolute necessity for safe and reliable water systems. It is long overdue for Congress to place as much importance on what is built underground as we do on above-ground projects that all can see. I also believe in the "dig once," when we are going to fix the roads, might as well fix the sewer systems while you are at it.

Unfortunately, years of neglect have created a crisis that this Congress must solve. EPA estimates that to deliver safe drinking water to every household in America, we would have to invest half a trillion dollars over the next 20 years to maintain or upgrade our pipes, storage, tanks, and treatment

facilities. Let that sink in a little bit. Half a trillion dollars, \$500 billion over two decades.

I have a two-part question, I would like to also send this to Governor Whitmer, but Governor Hogan, I hope that you will be able to address this issue first. Do you agree that water infrastructure should be a centerpiece of our build-back-better efforts? Second, could you discuss how robust federal investments in State and local water systems would help create jobs, foster economic growth, and most importantly, protect the health and safety of your constituents? Governor Hogan?

Senator Carper. Senator Duckworth, Governor Whitmer had to leave for another event.

Senator Duckworth. I knew, yes. I am just saying, if Governor Hogan could also address it.

Senator Carper. Oh, that is great, okay. Governor Hogan? You are battling cleanup here.

[Laughter.]

Senator Duckworth. It was really to both governors.

Senator Carper. Governor Hogan, are you there?

Senator Duckworth. I can go to Mayor Hancock, I have a question for Mayor Hancock, as well.

Senator Carper. All right, let's do that. Thank you.

Senator Duckworth. Mayor Hancock, it is estimated that Chicago drivers lose 138 hours each year due to congestion, a

tremendous loss of productivity that I am confident is also experienced in communities across our Nation. That is why one of my top priorities is making sure our forthcoming reauthorization proposal treats reducing roadway congestion as the national priority it is for the millions of Americans who are stuck driving to work every day.

I am confident we can build broad, bipartisan support of these efforts as evidenced by the inclusion of my proposal to establish a competitive congestion relief grant program in the surface transportation bill that our committee favorably reported last Congress.

Mayor Hancock, can you explain how authorizing a congressional relief grant program would help local governments like Denver advance innovative roadway congestion solutions?

Mayor Hancock. Thank you, Senator Duckworth, and I appreciate your question. Yes, I believe that with regard to people taking other modes of transportation, you have to offer just as many or more competitive driving options, or options for them than driving alone. Our single occupancy rate in Denver was over 73 percent. That is just unsustainable in a city that has grown as fast as the city of Denver.

So it is important that we offer options that give them the reliability, the predictability, and of course, cost efficiency as well for them to choose different modes of transportation or

to have multi-occupancy within a vehicle or multi-occupancy [in a mode. There should be focus on different modes and options for municipalities, whether it is simply building highways or streets. That why we are focused in Denver on things such as bike lanes and transit and other modes that move people, moving people and not just vehicles.

So we actually agree with what you found in Chicago, and recognize that until we get serious about that, in terms of creating options that make sense for people, that are just as competitive as driving alone, we won't be able to break through on this challenge of congestion.

Senator Duckworth. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to go ahead and submit my previous question for the record for the two governors and have them answer in writing. Thank you.

Senator Carper. Yes, that will be fine. I am happy to do that.

Senator Duckworth. Thank you.

Senator Carper. Any other comments, questions, Senator?

Senator Duckworth. No, I yield back. Thank you.

Senator Carper. Thanks so much for joining us today.

We have also been joined by Senator Lindsey Graham, who I know from experience has a real interest in some of the issues that we are talking about here today. Lindsey, we are happy you

have joined us, and welcome. You are recognized, and you will be followed by Senator Stabenow, Senator Kelly, and last but not least, Senator Padilla.

Senator Graham. Okay. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you and Senator Capito.

This should be the most bipartisan committee, because we all need roads and bridges and all that kind of good stuff. So, I will make a comment and then I will ask a question. I think we have got a Highway Trust Fund shortfall. Increasing gasoline taxes may be a necessary idea.

But what I want to share my thoughts with the committee is about the future. Our friends in Michigan, they tell me that most cars being made in the future are going to be electric, not gasoline driven. So, General Motors said that by 2035, they will do away with their gasoline-operated vehicles. That is a major societal change.

So whatever we do with the Trust Fund, we need to capture the fact that most cars, by the middle of the century, by 2050, probably won't run on gasoline. That will be good for the environment, but it will certainly require us to put new infrastructure in place and redesign the trust fund.

What I would like to do as we try to reauthorize the current system is to put some money aside to develop the infrastructure of the future. I think drones are going to be

more available when it comes to transporting material. I think trucks are probably going to be not just electric, maybe hydrogen vehicles in terms of long-haul trucking.

So the bottom line is, if it is true that the gasoline-driven car is going to be less plentiful on the road by the middle of the century and maybe the dominant mode of transportation will be something other than gasoline, we need to start now redesigning the trust fund. We need to start now plowing money into infrastructure consistent with a new way of transportation. And if it is true that most cars in the future are going to have a driverless component, seems to me we should be investing in the technology to make it as safe as possible.

The only thing I want to add to what has been said is the future. Let's take an opportunity in 2021 to start laying the groundwork for a more sustainable trust fund in terms of the way vehicles are going to be changing from gasoline to electric, let's look at the emergence of driverless vehicles and try to make them safer quicker.

If we can own this space in the 21st century as America and develop this technology and sell it around the world it would be one of the biggest things we have ever done as a Nation, I think, since maybe developing the car itself.

I don't know who we have as witnesses left, but here is a question to anybody out there. In your States, do you have a

plan to deal with the fact that there is going to be more non-gasoline-driven cars on your roads? Have you embraced the idea that the driverless vehicle is coming sooner rather than later? What thoughts do you have about how to accommodate these changes, and what plans do you have to capture money for the trust fund from non-gasoline driven cars in your State or your city? So whoever is out there, that is my question.

Senator Carper. I think we still have a mayor, and we still have a commissioner out there, so ladies first, please.

Senator Graham. We will start with the two that we got. Mayor?

Senator Carper. Commissioner, go ahead.

Ms. Sheehan. Senator Graham, I appreciate your remarks. We as State DOT leaders are very excited about the opportunity of connecting automated vehicles, and we also have been preparing, building out our EV charging infrastructure and planning for the future.

Senator Graham. If you don't mind, what percentage of cars in your State are electric vehicles at this point?

Ms. Sheehan. It is a relatively low percentage. It is only approximately 4 percent, I believe, as of this time. However, we are seeing that number increase year over year. So, here in New Hampshire, we established an electric vehicle charging commission. All of the State agencies have been

supporting the legislature so much that the programs that were discussed earlier in Michigan and other parts of the Country.

We are trying to bring all of the stakeholders to the table to make sure that we understand at what rate things will change, but most importantly, we do want to reassure the consumer that if they were to purchase an electric vehicle, that there is the infrastructure to support them moving freely within the State, especially when it comes to visitors. New Hampshire's economy is really driven by travel and tourism, and so we want to ensure that visitors to our State don't have that anxiety either about what infrastructure is available to them.

You also touched on connected and automated technologies. In 2019, there were over 36,000 individuals lost on our Nation's roads. That statistic is incredibly troubling, and the promise that connecting automated vehicles bring with them is the opportunity to ensure that, in the future, there are truly zero deaths in our system.

Those are initiatives that State DOTs are excited to work on, and we are preparing for the future. Our State legislatures are asking us to look at our existing State statutes, our administrative rules, our design criteria, and make sure that we are addressing the regulatory aspect of our work, and that is not a barrier to being able to deploy these technologies quickly and effectively.

Senator Carper. Senator Graham's time has expired. I still want the Mayor to respond briefly to his question, so Mayor, if you could do that, that would be great. Thanks.

Senator Graham. Yes, Mayor, if you could give us 30 seconds, I am sorry to go over here.

Mayor Hancock. Sure, Senator Graham, I can respond in 30 seconds. First of all, I appreciate your comments and your thoughts about the future. I want to submit that we are already behind the rest of the world, and all you have to do is leave our coast and go to a different country and find that the technology is advancing in terms of electrification, use of electric vehicles.

The real challenge, of course, is the lack of supply. More auto makers are rolling out more electric vehicles, so that is critical. Secondly is the cost, and we have got to make sure to get it down so that there is some equity within the system.

Finally, of course, is the infrastructure. We lack infrastructure. Let me submit that we talked about, at least, I suggested that the renewal of the Energy Efficiency Block Grant. That would be critical to help States and cities to proliferate charging stations and the infrastructure around our States.

If I could just add one last thing to your list in terms of looking to the future, that is the urban air travel system. Within urban areas, very soon, we won't be on surfaces. We have

technology today that can move people without being on the ground, and we need to begin to prepare for that as well.

Senator Carper. Senator Graham, your question is prescient. Remember the old movie, Back to the Future? Earlier in the hearing, we talked a little bit about the last bill that we passed out of here unanimously. I think it was 21 to nothing, a five-year reauthorization.

Included in that reauthorization was a 50-State pilot on vehicle miles traveled. We have so far, done about six or seven State pilots for vehicle miles traveled, and I described it as part of the future for transportation funding, maybe eventually the principal place. We are still going to have a bunch of cars and trucks and things on the road, because people keep their vehicles, on average, about 10 or 11 years. So they are going to be around for a while.

Thank you, it is great having you on the committee.  
Welcome aboard.

Next, Senator Stabenow.

Senator Stabenow. Well, thank you again, Mr. Chairman. When we are talking about electric vehicles, I certainly feel like we are in the Michigan Wheelhouse. I appreciate so much Governor Whitmer being with us this morning, as well as Governor Hogan.

Let me just add to the discussion on this. I couldn't

agree more that we have to look at our financing around transportation, given where we are going. I would also say this: that our companies are investing tens of billions of dollars on the future right now. They cannot get there without a partnership with us.

China has invested \$100 billion to get ahead of us, to not only own the technology, and part of this, to build these new vehicles, the plants have to be open. We are going to need a number of battery cell plants to be able to deal with the new technology and the parts that are needed.

This is very exciting, because we have all kinds of new, clean-energy jobs in manufacturing to give us the supply chain to be able to do it, but China is already doing it. They are already out there trying to own all of this, as well as the charging infrastructure, as well as all of it.

So we really are in a race, a competitive race that we can win. Right now the majority of the expertise and technology is in America, but it won't be unless we are partnering with them to get there.

I would just say not only are charging stations critical, we have got to deal with range anxiety, we have got to deal with how folks feel they can drive across the Country in these wonderful new vehicles, not only small vehicles, but your F-150 truck is going to be all electric, Mr. Chairman, coming next

year with Ford, as well as all kinds of others. I could do ads for all kinds of vehicles.

But the other thing I would say, until we get to the price point for consumers as well, the consumer tax credit that we have had in place that is now running out needs to be continued for a piece of time until we get the volume up. It is like any other kind of technology. Until there is enough purchasing power, you don't see the price go down. So electric vehicles, the cost points, and having the supply chain to be able to do this.

I just have one question, as we conclude, I appreciate very much all of our witnesses. I want to ask Ms. Sheehan, from your vantage point as President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, if Congress were able to meet the entirety of the investment backlog you have indicated there is, the investment backlog is \$836 billion for highways and bridges and \$122 billion for transit. If somehow, we could reach all of that or reduce it substantially, what would that mean to economic growth as we come out of the economic crisis and the pandemic?

Ms. Sheehan. Thank you, Senator. First and foremost, it would create immediate economic stimulus across the Country. Jobs in transportation are good-paying jobs. Given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, investing in infrastructure will truly

help us build back better.

Further to that, we as State DOTs are in the business of asset management. We want to make the most financially sound investments in our infrastructure, reducing the life cycle cost of operating that infrastructure.

So if we can address the backlog and move forward in a way that we can maintain the existing system in a good state of repair, that will save taxpayers money into the future. When we allow things to fall apart, it can cost four times to ten times as much to build the infrastructure back and have it in a good state of repair.

So as the owners of this infrastructure trying to manage it as effectively as possible, we really want to address that backlog and then move forward in a new day with a much more efficient way to maintain our systems.

But more than that, I talked about the high number of fatalities on our systems. These investments would save lives. We would be making long-term safety improvements, we would be improving quality of life for communities, building sidewalks and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, that are fantastic ways to stimulate economic activity in downtown areas. We would be addressing different aspects of quality of life, improving access and opportunity for every American.

Senator Stabenow. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that one of the reasons I am so pleased to be on this committee is that I think this committee has the opportunity to fundamentally change the future for our Country and for our citizens, and this is a huge part of it, so thank you.

Senator Carper. Senator Stabenow, I think you and Senator Kelly, Senator Padilla, and Senator Graham are really smart, because you joined this committee at a time when we can work on job creation at a time when we very much need it. We can work on improving the air quality that we breathe; we can work on climate change; we can just do so many good things. We can work on equity issues, and we really make a good committee better, but this is a great time to be on this committee. Thank you for joining us.

All right, Mark, my friend, welcome aboard, Captain. You are recognized.

Senator Kelly. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am pleased to be on this committee as well.

This question is for Commissioner Sheehan about NEPA reviews. I frequently hear concerns from transportation planners in Arizona about the limitations of when and how NEPA approvals can be completed. As you are aware, current guidelines from the Federal Highway Administration prevents States from making NEPA approval decisions on projects that are

not included in a statewide or metro transportation plan. In most cases, Federal funding cannot be used to complete the NEPA review of the project, which places an increased burden on State and local planning agencies.

Arizona has a number of large transportation projects, which are preparing for costly tier-two environmental impact statement assessments, including a project to expand highway I-10 between Phoenix and Tucson. There is another project called the Sonoran Corridor Project in Tucson. And the I-11 Project which could finally, and this is a big deal, finally connect Phoenix and Las Vegas via an interstate highway.

These projects, and projects like them throughout the Country, deserve to have thorough environmental reviews that allow affected communities the opportunity to provide some feedback. Yet, cost constraints and requirements that States and localities fully fund these reviews slows the process of getting these projects off the ground. That delays efforts to make infrastructure upgrades needed in Arizona and across the Country.

So, Commissioner Sheehan, as this committee considers surface transit reauthorization legislation, what steps can we take now to ensure transportation planners have the resources and flexibilities to produce high quality, timely, and accurate environmental reviews while preventing delays to the overall

transportation planning process?

Ms. Sheehan. First and foremost, providing adequate funding. If these projects have that dedicated stream of funding, then it is much easier to move them forward. So making sure that we have the resources so these projects can be included in our long-term transportation plans, and that everyone understands they are truly priorities to our States.

Beyond that, I believe we are up to eight States that currently have taken ownership of NEPA reviews. This provides them the opportunity to significantly streamline the delivery of their projects. As an example, I think California was the first State to pursue this. They are taking on that liability of ensuring their projects are in full compliance with all Federal regulations.

But in return for that, it expedites the advancement of those projects because we are not submitting documents to other agencies for their review and feedback. We are ensuring full compliance internally at our respective State DOTs. So continuing to advocate for those types of changes, where the States who are willing to can step up and take on more responsibility, but in no way circumvent or fail to meet their environmental commitments and obligations.

Senator Kelly. Commissioner, is New Hampshire one of those eight States?

Ms. Sheehan. We have not moved in that direction as of yet, but it is certainly something that we are exploring, seeing the tremendous success across the rest of the Country.

Senator Kelly. Thank you, that is very helpful.

Mr. Chairman, you were mentioning songs earlier, and I think the appropriate song might be The Rascal Flatts' Life is a Highway. Appropriate today. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Senator Carper. All right. It is always great to hear The Rascal Flatts; that is good.

All right, Alex, Senator Padilla, our new member from California. Welcome.

Senator Padilla. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does this make me the clean-up hitter?

Senator Carper. It does, you know.

Senator Padilla. Thank you for the welcome to the committee. I am eager. There is a lot of great work to be done this session.

I have two related topics I want to touch on, so if I may, Mr. Chair, I will get through both questions, and acknowledge who they are addressed to, and then sit back and hear the answer for both.

First, on the topic of resiliency and disaster preparedness. It is not just California's recent record

wildfire seasons, plural, not in a good way, of course, but severe flooding across various parts of the Country, to recent events in Texas. We have seen in recent years how the climate crisis is leading to more dangerous and more numerous natural disasters. As we work to address this reality, we must improve the resiliency of our roads, our bridges, and our infrastructure at large to adapt to and recover from extreme weather events.

I know Governor Whitmer is no longer with us, but she in her written testimony spoke to many of the roads that were washed out due to recent floods in Michigan. So let me just address this question, then, to Commissioner Sheehan, who also mentioned in her written testimony how the Department uses federal dollars to carry out a significant number of resiliency projects.

I understand that AASHTO has supported recent efforts by this committee to improve system resiliency, including by expanding project eligibility for the National Highway Performance Program, the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, and the Emergency Relief Program. I would love for the Commissioner to touch on the importance of resiliency projects for planning, and what steps this committee can take in the upcoming reauthorization bill to support States' efforts to improve resiliency in transportation systems.

The other question, more related than you may think, is for

Mayor Hancock. While the National Highway System connects cities and facilitates economic activity across the Nation, its construction historically has been deeply destructive for many communities, particularly lower-income communities and communities of color. The construction of highways through some neighborhoods has caused a displacement of predominately minority residents, and in many cases, fosters isolation from opportunity, heightened exposure to pollution, and chronic disinvestment.

Mayor Hancock, in his written testimony spoke to concerns about equity, and equity considerations going into planning efforts, and specific examples of not just Denver's experience in the past, but how Denver is now working in partnership with the State of Colorado to reconnect communities in the reconstruction of Interstate 70, which bisects the city.

So I would love for the mayor to speak to how this can serve as a model for reconnecting communities in other cities across the Country, and once again, how the Federal Government can play a bigger role in supporting projects that mitigate the detrimental impact of highways on historically disenfranchised communities.

Thank you both.

Ms. Sheehan. Thank you for the question, Senator. As part of the development of our transportation asset management plans,

State DOTs are required to do a risk and hazard analysis. Many of us have been working to build out our GIS information.

We have significant storm events in our States. We are mapping exactly which locations on our transportation system are impacted by those events and making sure that in the future, as we are advancing improvements in those locations, we are incorporating resiliency and ensuring that the impacts from prior storms are not allowed to occur in the future.

So we have really integrated resiliency into every aspect of work that we do. From day one when we are scoping a project, we are looking at that history of where we have seen significant impacts, especially from flooding, either in coastal areas or inland, when we have significant rain events, and making sure that we build it back better.

Senator Padilla. Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Hancock. Senator, with regard to your question around the I-70 Project and of course the issues of equity, it was when the City of Denver got involved in this conversation about the I-70 Project that we were able to bring to light the values of equity. This highway was placed, as you pointed out, in a primarily minority, low-income community, dividing the community, creating barriers and lack of investment for the foregone future. We had some options available, but none that

were, quite frankly, feasible in going forward.

So there were a few things that the City of Denver brought forward as a municipality who understood the challenges that this community faced, as well as the historical actions of environmental injustice. One was community engagement. The FHWA said this was probably the [indiscernible] model effort around community engagement that they have ever seen. We are proud of that. Between engaging the community and hearing the voices of the people who live there, but also understand the history was very important.

Empowering the local government to engage, the State Department of Transportation really helped us by allowing us, opening the door for us to be involved, we can bring forward the issues of equity and opportunity. Connecting roads in that community that would help provide new life and opportunities was also increasingly important as we moved in, as well as amenities. These were underserved communities, they didn't have access to parks. As part of this highway project, we lowered it, and we are capping it with a new park for the community that everyone can enjoy.

We have also built in some remedies to some of the environmental challenges, including pollution, but also flooding, helping to remedy the historic flooding in these neighborhoods in a project called Plot to Park. We merged two

very important but very expensive infrastructure programs, including this project, to alleviate the flooding of these neighborhoods that has been happening for hundreds of years and make it more, quite frankly, improve the quality of life for residents in the area.

So the Plot to Park Program was extremely important. Making sure that you are engaging municipalities, we have, again, a better understanding of the residents, the challenges of equity, the environmental injustices that have occurred, and creating opportunities around connectivity and renewed opportunities of investment was critically important on the I-70 Project.

Senator Padilla. Thank you both. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator Carper. Senator Padilla, thank you for some great questions.

I am going to yield now to Senator Capito, and she will give some closing statements, and then hand the gavel back to me.

Senator Capito. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our witnesses. I thought they were tremendous and gave us great insight and a broad understanding of how many of these programs impact their communities, their States, and I appreciate it, I know it is been a little bit lengthy for some.

I also would like to call attention to the fact that we had

almost unanimous membership here in our committee asking questions and engaging in this issue. I think if you close your eyes and didn't know who was asking the questions or from what party that person might be from, I think you see that there is a solidarity of interest and a grand desire to really get something done together in the surface transportation infrastructure area.

The variety of questions, whether it is formula funding or electric vehicles or bridge repair, or kind of cuts across every single State, we know that. Every State has more urban areas and lots of rural areas. So I think that the perspectives that all of our members have given us show the great interest that we all have in making sure that our States' needs are addressed.

I said in my beginning statement that flexibility was going to be very important. I think the governors backed me up on that. One-size-fits-all doesn't work for Denver, it won't work for Maryland, it might not work for West Virginia, and so the flexibility built into the program is really critical.

One of the areas that I think we had good agreement on is the speed to projects, the delivery of the actual project. I talked in my opening statements about the seven-year timeline, and how that is costly and may result in obviously fewer jobs, but also maybe incomplete projects or projects that are only partially able to be completed, and therefore not as useful and

not as critical to the infrastructure development of our individual States.

Certainty is something that we have all asked for, and that would be the predictability of a lengthy bill, five- or six-year bill, which I think provides the certainty that many folks talked about. Innovation was a huge topic. We heard a lot about electric vehicles, charging stations, which we had in our bill, we had the first climate chapter ever in a highway bill that we passed 21 to nothing.

We are very much committed to that on a bipartisan basis, and we want to make sure that it is in the best interest of everybody for the environmental reasons as well as the infrastructure development reasons.

I will say that we did hear a lot about, I thought it was interesting to hear from the different topics about electric, and when you are talking about electric vehicle charging stations, how that different municipalities and States are not waiting for the Federal Government to fill the gap.

I am sure that there are ways that we can help, but at the same time, we need to be relying on the resources that are available on the local and State level. They are ready to commit resources, and have. Certainly from the private sector, we don't want to displace that commitment, I don't think, with a Federal commitment. We are going to have enough on our plate

without co-opting where our States and municipalities are already willing to go with the private sector.

So I would say with all the electric vehicles that are being projected to be on our roads, the main thing is, we have to have safe highways, we have to have modernized highways, we have to have bridges that are safe. We have to go back to the core function of a surface transportation bill, not to say we are not going to build transportation for the future, because we will.

But we have to have, it is almost like the food and water aspects of our lives. There are basic things that we have to have as we move towards different parts of our society in different ways. Certainly, our job, I see, with all of the great things that we see in our future, we still have that core function. That is where I think you saw a lot of interest from our committee.

So I think you did a great job, Mr. Chairman with great witnesses, and I am glad to participate. I want to thank my staff; they got us all prepared, and your staff as well. We are working well together, let's keep it up.

He wants the gavel back, all right. Thank you.

Senator Carper. Thanks for sharing.

In closing, I want to just follow up, it is been just a great hearing. What a great hearing to start off our new

Congress. I think we have had all but two of our members who were able to participate, which is terrific attendance. I know that everybody has other committees and other hearings that they are trying to get to. So thanks to our colleagues, and a warm welcome to our new colleagues who were here today.

I want to say a special thanks to our staffs. I used to admire the way Max Baucus and Chuck Grassley worked together in the Finance Committee. They initially started by meeting, just the two of them would meet maybe once a week. Then over time, they would have another, like a chief of staff of something like that with them. But eventually, you could walk into a meeting between their two staffs, Max Baucus, a Democrat, Chuck Grassley, a Republican, on the Finance Committee, the two leads, and if you didn't know who was working for who, you wouldn't know.

I think that is a good goal for us, and I am encouraged that we are going to have some terrific collaboration.

I want to thank our witnesses. What a lineup. Staffs, thank you for bringing together four terrific witnesses.

We are deeply grateful to the governors, Governor Hogan, our neighbor not far away in Maryland, and Governor Whitmer, who is the governor of my favorite baseball team, the Tigers, and Mayor Hancock from Denver, and Commissioner Sheehan up in New Hampshire. You all did a wonderful job, and we appreciate your

joining us virtually.

I want to just say one thing, maybe one or two things in closing. We are so lucky to be here. We are so lucky to serve on this committee. I like to quote Einstein, and Einstein used to say, "in adversity, lies opportunity." Plenty of adversity, I talked about it when we began the hearing, but there is also opportunity here. If we are smart about it and we find ways to collaborate and work together, we are going to rise to the occasion. I am hopeful and encouraged that we will. The American people are counting on us.

I said earlier, at the beginning of the hearing about the train, Union Station, I walked up to the Capitol, the sun was out, it was so beautiful. The skies were blue over the Capitol, the sunshine over the Capitol. It felt like morning in America again. That is a good note for us to close on.

I have a couple of unanimous consent requests. I would ask unanimous consent to submit for the record a number of letters from associations focused on safety, electric charging, construction jobs, technology, and others. They are all eager to see Congress get to work on infrastructure for the benefit of all the American people, and so are we.

One other one, there has been a fair amount of discussion, and rightly so, on delay. We have included streamlining provisions in every reauthorization bill in the last 30 years.

I know every one that I had a chance to work on. We also need to recognize the delays caused by funding shortfalls; that is something we can do something about, and we need to.

I want to ask unanimous consent to submit for the record a report from AECOM, a consulting firm that looked at 40 major infrastructure projects and found a major challenge to 39 out of 40 was inadequate funding, not completion of environmental reviews, so let's keep that in mind. I hope our next bill will encourage innovative project delivery and also address our funding shortfalls. We need to do both.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Carper. Let me just ask the receptionist, anything else that we need? No?

All right, I think we are ready for takeoff. It was a good day. Thanks, everyone. And now with that, the hearing is concluded.

[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]