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BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,
UNITED STATES SENATE

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Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is carrying out President Trump and Secretary Duffy's vision—getting America building again. The fiscal year 2027 Budget for FHWA will enable FHWA to carry out this vision as FHWA expands, restores, and modernizes highways and bridges to improve the state of good repair, enhance resiliency, and improve system performance. FHWA is focused on large, durable projects that enhance safety—our top priority—while connecting our country and our people, and FHWA has made great progress delivering on the Administration's goal to get back to basics by building big, beautiful infrastructure. FHWA is ensuring taxpayer dollars are used effectively and efficiently to support much-needed infrastructure investment to move people and goods.

The Trump Administration inherited a backlog of over 3,200 projects across the Department of Transportation (DOT) that had been selected through a competitive grant process and announced, but did not have signed grant agreements. As of May 15, 53 percent of backlog projects have obligated funding and are underway. DOT will continue to work with communities to complete pre-construction activities such as NEPA, and finalize grant agreements. For FHWA-administered grants, including those administered on behalf of the Office of the Secretary (OST), we are moving forward with over 1,500 competitive grant awards from the backlog left by the prior Administration, while simultaneously moving forward with new grant selections. In just the time since President Trump took office in January 2025, FHWA has obligated nearly $8.4 billion for competitive grants administered by FHWA. FHWA is on pace to overwhelmingly surpass the total obligations of $9.4 billion for FHWA-administered competitive grants under the prior Administration.

Not only is FHWA actually obligating funds, but over 600 grant selections for FHWA-administered projects have been announced since President Trump took office, totaling over $2.4 billion, including large and rural bridge projects, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) projects, and safety projects, including safety projects on Tribal lands. FHWA is working diligently to issue Notices of Funding Opportunity, making more funds available for critical investments in transportation infrastructure that will improve the lives of Americans across the country while strengthening the economy over the long term. Just last

month, the Secretary announced a NOFO making $3 billion available under FHWA's Bridge Investment Program—a program focused on repairing bridges in poor condition so Americans can safely get to work and school, and American businesses can move their goods efficiently. In April, FHWA issued a NOFO making up to $3.8 million available under the Roadside Pollinators Program and last month, FHWA issued a NOFO making up to $150 million available under the Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Program and a NOFO making up to $27 million available under the National Scenic Byways Program. These four NOFOs issued in just the last two months brings the total number of NOFOs issued for FHWA-administered programs since January 2025 to seven.

Based on the latest National Household Travel Survey (2022), 91 percent of travel in the United States occurred on roads and bridges, demonstrating why it is so critical that we get back to basics and improve this infrastructure. FHWA is moving these infrastructure projects forward as part of its commitment to excellence, and the results speak for themselves. From January 20, 2025 through April 30, 2026, FHWA authorized action on over 88,000 unique projects, more than 50,000 of which are construction projects. During this period, FHWA obligated $89.4 billion and expended $77.7 billion in support of critical infrastructure projects.

Under the Trump Administration, the Department is not simply announcing award selections, it is taking action to accelerate project delivery. Last June, Secretary Duffy released three sets of landmark revisions to the Department's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing procedures, including updates to the FHWA, FRA, and FTA joint NEPA implementing regulations found in 23 CFR 771.

In addition to these sweeping revisions, FHWA expanded the NEPA Assignment Program—a powerful tool to accelerate project delivery—to empower States and remove unnecessary delays and costs. States participating in the NEPA Assignment Program complete Environmental Impact Statements faster than projects led by the Federal government. Last year, the Secretary announced a NEPA Assignment agreement with Texas that serves as a model for other States. The success of NEPA Assignment is not limited to Texas—it is a national movement. In July, the Secretary sent a letter to governors encouraging States to take advantage of the unique statutory authority. In the last six months both Maine and Nebraska have also executed memorandums of understanding to expand their participation in the NEPA Assignment Program, bringing the total number of States taking full advantage of the program to nine. I was recently in Ohio, where I signed a renewal with the Ohio Department of Transportation, extending the terms of their agreement for another ten years. FHWA has also received formal letters of interest in the NEPA Assignment Program from Illinois, Indiana, Hawaii, Georgia, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Virginia.

In addition, over one year ago, in May 2025, FHWA executed a first-of-its-kind programmatic agreement with Connecticut, establishing a unified federal review process and delegating authority to the State to accelerate the review of individual transportation projects that may affect historic properties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This type of streamlined agreement could potentially cut six weeks or more from the schedules of at least 90

projects in the State annually. This is just another example of the many innovative actions this Administration is taking to ensure America is building again.

The Trump Administration has proven it is possible to deliver projects faster. In response to Hurricane Helene damage, FHWA is repairing 58 landslides and damaged sites across 200 miles of roadway on the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. Through innovative contracting and project delivery methods, FHWA will complete the $150 million in damage repairs by end of 2026, one year ahead of initial completion estimates.

FHWA is committed to working together with States to accelerate project delivery. Last November, I told States their priorities would be my priorities and I asked each State Department of Transportation to identify their top three priorities. All States, as well as Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, responded. I am pleased to report FHWA has already cleared over 35 of these top priorities, including the I-64 Eugene A. Carter Memorial Bridge in West Virgina, the Chesapeake Bay crossing Draft Environmental Impact Statement in Maryland, and advancing the $4 billion Brent Spence Bridge project in Ohio and Kentucky into final construction, which addresses one of the nation's most severe freight bottlenecks. FHWA will continue this aggressive pace, working closely with every State to not only define and track their top priorities, but to see what FHWA can do to help make them a reality.

FHWA continues to advance safety as our number one priority. In April, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced traffic deaths fell to record lows in 2025. While the number is still unacceptably high, progress is being made. With an estimated 36,640 traffic fatalities in 2025—a 6.7% decrease from 2024—the nation saw its second-lowest traffic fatality rate in recorded history at 1.10 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

Last July, Secretary Duffy launched FHWA's nationwide roadway safety initiative to prioritize investments that improve mobility and safety on roadways. In a letter to every Governor, the Secretary asked that their States participate in FHWA's Safe Arterials for Everyone through Reliable Operations and Distraction-Reducing Strategies—SAFE ROADS—initiative. The SAFE ROADS initiative is a "Back to Basics" strategy serving as one example of FHWA's strong partnership with States. This initiative focuses on non-freeway arterials, where more than half of U.S. roadway deaths occur. In a unified national response, all 50 States, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico responded to the Secretary's request to participate in this lifesaving initiative, identifying nearly 4,300 non-freeway arterial segments and intersections for safety and operational improvements. FHWA is tracking a focused subset of 160 projects and programs to showcase lifesaving results, for example, West Virginia's Road Ready educational program, which delivers age-specific safety education in schools, emphasizing distraction awareness for both passengers and drivers. As another example, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation purchased and delivered materials directly to municipalities to rapidly convert nearly 90 intersections to All-Way stops and install pedestrian-activated high-intensity LED lights (referred to as rectangular rapid flashing beacons) to enhance driver awareness of pedestrians at 221 crosswalks statewide.

The safety of the travelling public—as well as the men and women who maintain our roads and highways—is incredibly important to me. In 2024, about 850 people were killed in work zone crashes in America. This is unacceptable. FHWA's Work Zone Management program aims to enhance the safety and mobility of traffic through work zones by providing guidelines, tools, strategies, research, and resources for effective management. FHWA's Work Zone Safety Grant Program has been used to train more than 130,000 field workers, and state, local and tribal personnel through 5,100 courses. I was proud to announce in April, at National Work Zone Awareness Week, that FHWA is investing $500,000 in a brand-new training program to manage and design advanced work zones for up to 110 nationwide organizations, including State Departments of Transportation.

FHWA is also working closely with our State and local transportation partners to enhance safety for crash responders through our Traffic Incident Management (TIM) responder training. In April, FHWA hosted the first-ever National Day of TIM Responder Training—a nationwide call to action to save lives on American roads. FHWA's no-cost TIM training teaches police, firefighters, highway workers, paramedics, and towing personnel best practices for safe, coordinated crash response, quick scene clearance, improved communication, and prevention of secondary crashes. The Trump Administration has committed to train one million first responders with FHWA's life-saving program. To date, more than 878,000 responders have been trained with TIM training.

FHWA oversees the $3 billion annual Highway Safety Improvement Program which, since January 2025, has invested in nearly 5,000 projects, including a project in Rhode Island to install two new crosswalks, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), and adaptive traffic signal control technologies in North Providence. The traffic signal controls have resulted in a 19 percent reduction in crashes and the other improvements have resulted in a 36 percent reduction in crashes—demonstrating the real impact of these investments in improving safety.

In March, the Secretary announced more than $21 million in grant award selections under the Tribal Transportation Program Safety Fund that will fund 84 projects for 61 Tribes in 13 States. These projects will reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries on Native American and Alaska Native lands. For example, the Colorado River Indian Tribes in Arizona was selected for funding for a project that will install traffic calming features to address speeding concerns and enhance road safety.

FHWA is not only working with States to accelerate their top priorities and promote safety, but we are also working with States to tackle the Nation's growing congestion problem. In 2024, the average urban auto commuter spent 63 hours stuck in traffic. This translates to $269 billion in lost productivity, wasted fuel, and time away from family and loved ones. Delays to commercial and freight activity also impact the economy. From 2019 to 2024, congestion related costs for the trucking industry increased by more than 40 percent. In April, the Secretary launched the Freedom to Drive initiative—calling on governors nationwide to partner with the Department to address the congestion crisis. The Secretary asked governors to identify their worst congestion bottlenecks and to outline actions to address congestion. The Freedom to Drive initiative will use every tool in the Federal toolbox to fix congestion. This national effort aims to save

American families both time and money by focusing on maximizing roadway capacities, fast-tracking projects that alleviate congestion chokepoints, and leveraging American technology and private-sector partnerships.

FHWA is dedicated to supporting technology and innovation. Since its inception in 2009, the Every Day Counts (EDC) program has championed 61 innovations. The EDC program has been an engine for rapid deployment of proven technologies and processes. In February, FHWA announced EDC-8—the eighth round of this initiative. This latest round of EDC innovations will help States build projects faster and improve safety. For example, Advancing Nighttime Work Zone Safety is an initiative aiming to offer tools to help transportation agencies adopt safer, more innovative nighttime work zone practices, improving safety, efficiency and predictability in nighttime roadwork zones. The Connected Corridors initiative will share real-time data to provide clearer views of highway conditions, and work-zone data to improve visibility for road workers and drivers. Another EDC-8 innovation—Beyond Build: Innovative Project Delivery Methods—uses alternative contracting methods to offer flexible tools that bring in expertise earlier and reduce risks, helping agencies deliver projects faster, smarter, and with better long-term outcomes. These are just some examples. The six innovations included in EDC-8 are taking transportation solutions to a new level to ensure our roads and bridges are built better and in less time.

FHWA is also investing in roadway digital infrastructure, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and Artificial Intelligence (AI). FHWA is building the frameworks and standards to make our highways digital, secure, and data-driven. Combining intelligent transportation system applications, a comprehensive digital environment, and the capabilities of AI will enable creation of new applications beyond anything possible today. FHWA recently announced that it will establish the AI Deployment Center of Excellence (COE) to serve as a national resource to guide AI adoption across surface transportation. As part of that effort, a National AI Coalition Transportation Pooled-Fund Study will partner with State DOTs, local transportation agencies, industry, and other partners to develop a national strategic AI deployment roadmap. Under FHWA's leadership, this coalition will develop a comprehensive AI research framework to define required AI functions, the datasets and methods needed for development and verification, and a plan to work with our partners to fulfill the national vision for AI deployment in surface transportation. FHWA has also awarded funding under the Exploratory Advanced Research (EAR) Program at the Turner Fairbank Highway Research Center to accelerate applications of AI for system safety and reliability by embedding term-limited, post-doctoral researchers in laboratories and research programs.

FHWA is celebrating many important milestones this year. As America marks not only our nation's 250th birthday, we are also celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System. The Trump Administration is moving full speed ahead to honor these milestones.

We are also celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Route 66. This historic, scenic route spans the heart of America, symbolizing mobility, freedom, and the pursuit of the American Dream. Route 66 paved the way for our Interstates, figuratively and literally, as parts of it were integrated into the Interstate Highway System. For 70 years the Interstate Highway System has powered

American commerce, bolstered our economy, and connected communities across our beautiful country.

As we approach our 250th Anniversary and focus on building the highways of the future, it is important to reflect on how far America's transportation system has come. Our transportation system has gone from dirt roads and horse-drawn carriages to a nationwide Interstate System and cars that drive themselves. I look forward to seeing the continued improvements and innovations in the American transportation system in our next 250 years as we usher in a new Golden Age of Transportation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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