City of Phoenix
Office of Mayor Kate Gallego

United States Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Hearing: Constructing the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: Stakeholders' Perspectives

Written Testimony of Kate Gallego, Mayor of Phoenix

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

Chair Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, Senator Kelly, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the invitation to testify today on Surface Transportation Reauthorization and the federal government's critical role in building and maintaining our nation's transportation infrastructure.

I am honored to share my perspective and offer insight from local government. But first, a little about me. I have the great privilege of serving as the mayor of the fifth largest city in America. More than 1.7 million people call Phoenix home – that's more than the population of 11 states. We have a lot of people, and a lot of roads: nearly 5,000 miles of them.

Throughout my time as mayor, and before that as a member of the City Council, finding ways to improve our transportation and infrastructure has been a top priority for me.

I served as Chair of our Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Maricopa Association of Governments, and I have helped lead our transit agency, Valley Metro. I serve as Co-Chair of Accelerator for America, which operates the national infrastructure advocacy coalition, United for Infrastructure. We were thankful to Chair Capito for kicking off our Infrastructure Week event this year.

I Chaired the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transforming Transportation Advisory Committee, a national panel that advised on how to use technology to improve surface transportation. Our work included tools to speed project delivery as well as how to best use AI and automation.

I also serve as the Chair of Climate Mayors, where I have the privilege of working with a bipartisan network of nearly 350 of my colleagues to work towards making our communities

safer and more resilient. Earlier this year, our coalition had the honor of speaking with Ranking Member Whitehouse, which was a perfect showcase of the benefit of direct collaboration and communication between our levels of government.

That is why I am excited about the opportunity to speak with you all today. The Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) was revolutionary for our city. I know several Members of this Committee drafted and supported large parts that legislation, including Chair Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse, and I want to thank you for that support. It is essential that the funding levels from that law continue, or better yet, increase, to allow states and local governments to carry on the essential work that law spearheaded.

One thing that I know is top of mind for all of us is safety. With an average of 30,000 crashes annually and an average of two crashes resulting in serious injuries every single day, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has consistently ranked Phoenix in the top 3 cities in the nation for overall traffic fatalities. That is not something we are proud of.

As Mayor, the moments that stick with me the most in this job are the tragedies that involve children. Both as a mom, and as a local leader, there is nothing worse than seeing a child get hurt in your community.

One moment that I will always carry with me was speaking with a father who lost his daughter due to a traffic accident—he gave me a picture of her and asked me to make sure it never happened again to another parent. I still have her photo.

As a result of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program, we have been able to address some of the safety issues on the roads that took his daughter's life. This grant allowed us to implement proven safety measures designed to address issues involving pedestrians, bicyclists, people taking transit, and drivers on the critical corridor of Indian School Road from 91st Avenue to 39th Avenue.

The Safe Streets program is helping us save lives in Phoenix, and I know that the communities Chair Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and other Members of this Committee represent benefited from this program's investments as well.

For all of our communities, infrastructure benefits our economy and our security. Phoenix is a city built on innovation, and I am proud to share that it is a burgeoning technology hub. Our city landed a historic $165 billion semiconductor manufacturing plant that is creating thousands of great-paying high-skilled career path jobs in the industries of the future. The commitment to improving our transportation infrastructure is one of the reasons why its operator, TSMC, chose Phoenix. Their investment in Phoenix means that we once again make the most advanced chips

in America, important for our national security. I appreciate EPW's partnership in strengthening our freeway system, which is so key to our manufacturing sector.

Another challenge Phoenix faces is rising temperatures. Just last week, we hit over 115 degrees. Our highway infrastructure is required to face this reality head on and has to be built and maintained differently—it must be resilient. I know that after the devastating natural disasters we have seen across the country, that I am not the only local leader thinking about how to make our infrastructure more resilient—it is something we must take into consideration with every single project.

Grant programs such as Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) help cities invest in projects such as cool pavement, which lowers street surface temperatures. I am thankful to Senator Kelly for helping get Healthy Streets included in the IIJA, and I encourage Congress to provide funds for that program in the future. Healthy Streets would help us continue to implement programs such as cool corridors, which includes tree planting and shade infrastructure with a focus on transit corridors and the highest frequency pedestrian pathways.

Our city is constantly working to address these challenges, but our needs significantly outpace our means, which is why the partnership with the federal government is so vital. This year, Phoenix's Street Transportation Department's Capital Improvement Program is estimated at just under $500 million.

Part of that funding is from the IIJA. This law has increased funding available for our region via the Federal Highway Administration by $525 million over the five-year period. In addition, more than $500 million in discretionary funding from IIJA has been awarded to Phoenix either directly or indirectly through partnerships.

These funds support the 35th Avenue I-10 to Camelback Road Project. Its goal is to enhance safety for vehicles and pedestrians using proven measures coupled with technological advances to reduce travel times, improve overall flow, reduce congestion, and improve air quality.

And to make sure projects like these are completed and maintained, it is critical that cities are included as part of the conversation, and that their priorities are funded. More than 75 percent of road miles are owned by cities and counties. In addition, local governments own and operate more than half of our bridges and the majority of our public transit systems. Local leaders drive the same roads as our constituents every day, and we are well equipped to determine where to make key investments.

In the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill, I encourage Congress to invest more often and more directly to local governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, not just

to states. And in addition, I urge Congress to consider and address the unique needs of fast-growing cities and states such as Phoenix.

The discretionary programs in the IIJA helped cities, including mine, tremendously, and Congress should continue to invest in those programs to meet the needs of communities today.

With continued help from Congress, which has so often been a key partner of cities, America's infrastructure will be safer, more resilient, better maintained, and more adept to the needs of each community. So many of the Members on this Committee have been critical to maintaining that partnership, and I thank each and every one of you personally for your support.

Phoenix is a growing city whose best days are still ahead of it, and continued partnership with Congress is essential to maintaining that future.

Thank you all for your time. I look forward to your questions.