Statement of
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U.S. Department of Transportation
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Introduction

Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today as you consider my nomination for Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. It is an honor and privilege to have been recommended by Secretary LaHood and nominated by President Obama for this very important position. I appreciate the significant role this Committee plays in establishing transportation policy and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your staff to continue to improve delivery of the Federal-aid highway program.

As the former Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and former President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), I am well aware of the many responsibilities and challenges that lie ahead for the next Federal Highway Administrator. In the immediate future, we near expiration of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) coupled with the impending cash shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund, and in the long-term, we must identify sustainable funding mechanisms to address our aging infrastructure and congested roads in the face of a struggling economy. Going forward, we must ensure that our transportation system is equipped to meet the growing demands of freight movement if we are to remain competitive in a global economy. We must also consider multimodal solutions to reduce the transportation sector's greenhouse gas emissions. Our highways must be made safer, our existing infrastructure must be preserved, and its performance improved, and future surface transportation needs must be met if we are to stimulate economic growth in our Nation.

If I am confirmed, my key focus areas will include safety; implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA); reauthorization; and transportation solutions through innovation, research, and technology.

Safety

First, with regard to safety, I share Secretary LaHood's commitment to safety as the highest priority at the Department. While recent statistical evidence shows that fatalities and injuries on our roads are declining, too many people still die or are injured in highway crashes each year. If I am confirmed as the FHWA Administrator, I will work

with the Administration, Congress, State DOTs, transportation safety advocates, and the public to continue the downward trend in highway fatalities and injuries.

ARRA Implementation

If confirmed, I will also focus on ensuring the successful deployment of highway dollars under ARRA. Like the President and the Secretary, I strongly believe that, through the efficient implementation of Recovery Act projects, FHWA plays a key role in creating jobs, putting people back to work, and keeping families from home foreclosure.

FHWA has been in the forefront of working with the States to assist in advancing infrastructure projects funded with Recovery Act funding, and FHWA has seen much success to date. Recently, Secretary LaHood celebrated the 2000th project approved—rebuilding a $68 million interchange on I-94 in Portage, Michigan, which is expected to create 900 jobs this summer. And, according to the Recovery.gov website, as of May 22, FHWA authorized 3,497 projects in all 50 States, the District of Colombia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands for a total of $12.01 billion in obligations, which equates to 45 percent of total funds available.

As Administrator, I will work diligently to ensure that these funds continue to be distributed as quickly and effectively as possible.

Reauthorization

Another priority, if I am confirmed as FHWA Administrator, will be to develop a robust transportation reauthorization solution in partnership with Congress, the Administration, Secretary LaHood, and the various transportation stakeholders. Too often, we think about economic competition among cities and regions in the United States. However, in the next authorization of surface transportation programs, we cannot forget that America must compete with such nations as China and India.

We need a transportation solution that:

- keeps both rural and urban America moving and economically competitive in the 21st century;
- meets the needs of the American public and business community to ensure safety, a better quality of life and a vibrant economy;
- considers the diverse needs of regions and populations throughout the Nation;
- supports environmental stewardship;
- blends and synchronizes public and private sector collaboration; and
- ensures accountability and transparency of public expenditures in transportation.

If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary LaHood and the other modal administrators to consider coordinated strategies and multimodal solutions to address our transportation challenges.

Innovation, Research

If confirmed as the Federal Highway Administrator, I will also encourage the use of innovation, research, and technology to solve our transportation problems—for example, to enhance transportation system safety and performance. We also need to identify and develop innovative environmental, congestion, and finance solutions, and share best practices in the delivery of projects and in other areas of importance to transportation stakeholders.

Conclusion

I am mindful of the challenges that face the next Federal Highway Administrator. With my background in civil engineering and a transportation career spanning over 25 years, including leading ADOT for 7 and 1/2 years, I bring the experience, knowledge, management, and leadership skills to guide FHWA through the challenges that lie ahead. The employees at FHWA possess an incredible wealth of knowledge and expertise, and I look forward to the opportunity to work with them as well on these challenges.

During my tenure as Director, ADOT successfully: 1) built the Regional Freeway System in the Phoenix area six years ahead of schedule, 2) delivered the statewide transportation construction program on time for the past eight years, and 3) continued to provide excellent customer service at all Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) field offices throughout the State. This was accomplished through innovative management strategies and solutions during a time of hyper-growth in Arizona, when demand for MVD services increased dramatically and the highway construction program doubled. I also led ADOT in implementing many innovations in the areas of funding and financing, technology, infrastructure, research, planning and internal operations, that resulted in improved agency operations and program delivery.

I am committed to working with you, the Administration, Secretary LaHood, and all transportation stakeholders to find ways to meet our Nation's transportation needs.

Madam Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration. I would be happy to answer your questions.