WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SEAN MCMASTER,
NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR,
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMIINISTRATION,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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

May 14, 2025

Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination for the position of Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Duffy for the opportunity to serve in this position. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve the President's and Secretary's vision of building big, beautiful American infrastructure.

With me today is my amazing wife Brittany and two of my three children Grady and Emerson. I would also like to mention my oldest son Connor who couldn't be here today. He is a newly minted Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corps serving our country as an air traffic controller based in California. Without their tireless support and understanding the commitment required to serve in the Federal Government would not be possible.

We must work to build and restore the beautiful roads, bridges, and tunnels across the nation. FHWA's 2024 National Bridge Inventory data shows that more than 83,000 out of 147,000 bridges on the National Highway System are in fair or poor condition. While we have made progress advancing these priorities, the current state of our critical infrastructure must be further improved. If I am confirmed, I will work tirelessly to support the Secretary's efforts to manage this challenge. This work, and all work under my leadership, if confirmed, will be guided by my top priority – and the top priority of the Department – safety.

As the transportation industry is painfully aware, delays in project delivery can delay safety enhancements and drive up project costs. Data from FHWA's National Highway Construction Cost Index shows that transportation construction costs have increased from 1.91 in March 2021 to 3.19 in March 2024 - a 67 percent increase. I saw first-hand the impacts to cost, schedule and delivery of essential infrastructure projects during my time at HNTB working directly with state and local leaders as they were challenged to identify and attain federal funding in time to support their critical transportation infrastructure needs. It is essential that we build projects more quickly and efficiently.

We must further streamline project delivery, including the permitting process. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and Congress on ways to improve efficiency and

reduce costs so more of the funds being invested in our infrastructure will go to building the infrastructure.

I know from experience that this is achievable. While I served at the Department of Transportation during the first Trump Administration, the I-85 bridge in Atlanta reopened less than seven weeks after a fire caused its devastating collapse in March 2017. Thanks to Emergency Relief funds from FHWA, the bridge was quickly rebuilt using innovative components and state-of-the-art concrete. Significantly, the bridge reopened ahead of schedule—demonstrating that time and cost savings are attainable.

This is an important moment for FHWA. In addition to its ongoing work, FHWA must also look forward as the current surface transportation authorization, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, is set to expire at the end of September 2026. Surface reauthorization is vital for maintaining and enhancing the safety of our nation's roads, bridges and tunnels. It provides U.S. transportation infrastructure with policy direction and consistent multi-year funding. While I served as Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department, I was fortunate to lead the development of its surface reauthorization proposal that included FHWA. Through this work I met with key stakeholders of FHWA to understand the needs and impacts of the reauthorization on our states and local communities.

This Committee has already started its critical work on surface transportation reauthorization, and Secretary Duffy appeared before this Committee last month to discuss these efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and Congress throughout the reauthorization process so that we can realize a golden age of transportation.

As the Administration and Congress embark on this transformation through the accelerated deployment of critical projects, further reductions in red tape, common-sense solutions for infrastructure needs, and reauthorization legislation, it is critically important that we fully understand the unique challenges affecting states throughout the country. Through various meetings with state and local transportation leaders during my time as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Department of Transportation and as a National Practice Consultant at HNTB, it is clear that states have a unique understanding of their specific needs. FHWA maintains strong partnerships with state Departments of Transportation nationwide. If confirmed, I will continue to support those critical partnerships and work to ensure that states receive consistent guidance and support from FHWA.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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