



The Honorable Sam Graves  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1135 Longworth House Office Building  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 5, 2025

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

For decades, the Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure has developed a Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill to fund infrastructure and ensure the safety of the United States' transportation systems. Since our founding in 1997, the New Democrat Coalition has consistently prioritized sustainable funding and financing; safe, resilient, and innovative infrastructure programs; and smart planning, zoning, and development. As you work in a bipartisan fashion to craft the Surface Transportation Reauthorization package, we are eager to find a pragmatic path forward that meets the needs of the American people.

As outlined below, New Dems are committed to updating our transportation infrastructure, creating quality jobs, investing in our nation's preparedness and resilience, and developing more affordable housing. We ask for your strong consideration of the following priorities as you develop the bill:

**Smart Planning, Zoning, and Development**

- **Simplify project planning and success** by directing the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop frameworks for best practices on zoning and land-use policies, including common land use guidance.
- **Get projects built and operating quicker** through reforms to federal permitting processes that delay project groundbreaking, construction, and operation. These reforms should shorten timelines on all types of federal authorizations for projects.
- **Encourage transit-oriented development** in line with [H.R. \\_\\_\\_\\_](#), the Build More Housing Near Transit Act (reintroduction forthcoming), by directing the Secretary of Transportation to boost a transit project's rating if the project includes pro-housing policies for areas along the project route. This should include a directive for the Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop a methodology to evaluate the merits of the pro-housing policies documented in a Capital Investment Grants application.

- **Enhance infrastructure resiliency and protect taxpayer investments** by requiring state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to identify in long range transportation plans all assets vulnerable to common natural disasters in the region and identify which assets need to operate during a disaster or immediately after, along with the improvements required for that to occur.
- **Support infrastructure maintenance** by requiring state DOTs and MPOs to detail in their Statewide Transportation Improvement Program/Transportation Improvement Program projected progress toward repair targets and how funds support that progress. These Improvement Programs should be posted on Federal Highway Administration and Transit Administration websites in a machine-readable format and be fully searchable to enhance transparency and accountability.

### **Sustainable Funding and Financing**

- **Support the safety of America's bridges** by fully funding the Bridge Investment Program, one of the most sought-after programs providing federal funding. The Committee should also make improvements to the program by requiring the Department of Transportation to issue guidance for reviewers on how to conduct and document the quality control process to ensure all applications are consistently evaluated.
- **Improve community safety and access to essential services** through continued funding for the Reconnecting Communities Grant Program, ensuring planning and capital grants for communities to redesign the built environment to meet modern needs.
- **Bolster Americans' transportation choices** by continuing to provide robust funding for the Capital Investment Grant program and passenger rail grant programs, supporting different modes of transportation such as buses and trains.
- **Focus on current infrastructure needs rather than creating new ones** by requiring grantees to demonstrate that they can operate and maintain an asset throughout its useful life. New capacity projects should have a federal match of 50% to incentivize the maintenance of existing infrastructure rather than the development of new roads or bridges.

### **Safe, Resilient, and Innovative Infrastructure Programs**

- **Improve work zone and traffic safety** by requiring the Department of Transportation to collect and analyze data on roadside vehicle crashes and work zone crashes to develop strategic plans to stop these incidents in line with bipartisan legislation like [H.R. 2992](#), the Preventing Roadside and Work Zone Deaths Act.
- **Reduce vehicle accidents with animals** and improve habitat connectivity by reauthorizing the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP) established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- **Ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars and minimize project disruption** by directing the creation of a "Dig Once" Policy across all infrastructure projects involving excavation or roadwork. By coordinating the installation of multiple utilities during a single construction project, such as broadband cables, electrical lines, and water systems, the policy eliminates the need for repeated excavations, which are not only costly but also cause significant disruption to communities.

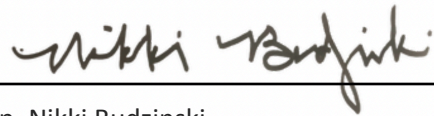
- **Protect vulnerable persons in our communities** by supporting installation of safety barriers at high-risk areas for suicide, such as bridges, rail stations and crossings, and parking garages, in line with bipartisan legislation like [H.R. 3505](#), the Barriers to Suicide Act.
- **Enhance rail safety** through the inclusion of language that ensures strong federal oversight and expands resources for communities and railway stakeholders.
- **Boost project transparency and accountability** by requiring federally funded infrastructure projects to have publicly accessible and easily viewable signs at project sites with the name of the project and a color-coded system showing if the project is on-time and on-budget, to be updated on a consistent basis. These signs should not be promotional or distracting and should not carry the name of contractors, public officials, labor organizations, or related logos and symbols in line with current standards in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Sincerely,



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Rep. Shomari C. Figures  
Transportation Task Force Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Nikki Budzinski  
Vice Chair for Policy  
New Democrat Coalition