CELEBRATING 50 YEARS: THE EISENHOWER INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

(109–85)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT AND PIPELINES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JUNE 27, 2006

Printed for the use of the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

30–655 PDF WASHINGTON : 2007

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2250 Mail: Stop SSOP, Washington, DC 20402–0001

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

DON YOUNG, Alaska, *Chairman*

THOMAS E. PETRI, Wisconsin, *Vice-Chair*
SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT, New York
HOWARD COBLE, North Carolina
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., Tennessee
WAYNE T. GILCHREST, Maryland
JOHN L. MICA, Florida
PETER HOEKSTRA, Michigan
VERNON J. EHLERS, Michigan
SPENCER BACHUS, Alabama
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, Ohio
SUE W. KELLY, New York
RICHARD H. BAKER, Louisiana
ROBERT W. NEY, Ohio
FRANK A. LOBIONDO, New Jersey
JERRY MORAN, Kansas
GARY G. MILLER, California
ROBIN HAYES, North Carolina
ROB SIMMONS, Connecticut
HENRY E. BROWN, JR., South Carolina
TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON, Illinois
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, Pennsylvania
SAM GRAVES, Missouri
MARK R. KENNEDY, Minnesota
BILL SHUSTER, Pennsylvania
JOHN BOOZMAN, Arkansas
JIM GERLACH, Pennsylvania
MARIO DIAZ-BALART, Florida
JON C. PORTER, Nevada
TOM OSBORNE, Nebraska
KENNY MARCHANT, Texas
MICHAEL E. SODREL, Indiana
CHARLES W. DENT, Pennsylvania
TED POE, Texas
DAVID G. REICHERT, Washington
CONNIE MACK, Florida
JOHN R. 'RANDY' KUHL, JR., New York
LUIS G. FORTUÑO, Puerto Rico
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, Georgia
CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR., Louisiana
JEAN SCHMIDT, Ohio

JAMES L. OBERSTAR, Minnesota
NICK J. RAHALL, II, West Virginia
PETER A. DEFAZIO, Oregon
JERRY F. COSTELLO, Illinois
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, District of Columbia
JERROLD NADLER, New York
CORRINE BROWN, Florida
BOB FILNER, California
EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, Texas
GENE TAYLOR, Mississippi
JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, California
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, Maryland
EARL BLUMENAUER, Oregon
ELLEN O. TAUSCHER, California
BILL PASCRELL, JR., New Jersey
LEONARD L. BOSWELL, Iowa
TIM HOLDEN, Pennsylvania
BRIAN BAIRD, Washington
SHELLEY BERKLEY, Nevada
JIM MATHESON, Utah
MICHAEL M. HONDA, California
RICK LARSEN, Washington
MICHAEL E. CAPUANO, Massachusetts
ANTHONY D. WEINER, New York
JULIA CARSON, Indiana
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, New York
MICHAEL H. MICHAUD, Maine
LINCOLN DAVIS, Tennessee
BEN CHANDLER, Kentucky
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
RUSS CARNAHAN, Missouri
ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ, Pennsylvania
JOHN T. SALAZAR, Colorado
JOHN BARROW, Georgia

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT AND PIPELINES

THOMAS E. PETRI, Wisconsin, *Chairman*

SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT, New York
HOWARD COBLE, North Carolina
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., Tennessee
JOHN L. MICA, Florida
PETER HOEKSTRA, Michigan
SPENCER BACHUS, Alabama
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, Ohio
SUE W. KELLY, New York
RICHARD H. BAKER, Louisiana
ROBERT W. NEY, Ohio
FRANK A. LOBIONDO, New Jersey
JERRY MORAN, Kansas
GARY G. MILLER, California, *Vice-Chair*
ROBIN HAYES, North Carolina
ROB SIMMONS, Connecticut
HENRY E. BROWN, JR., South Carolina
TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON, Illinois
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, Pennsylvania
SAM GRAVES, Missouri
MARK R. KENNEDY, Minnesota
BILL SHUSTER, Pennsylvania
JOHN BOOZMAN, Arkansas
MARIO DIAZ-BALART, Florida
JON C. PORTER, Nevada
TOM OSBORNE, Nebraska
KENNY MARCHANT, Texas
MICHAEL E. SODREL, Indiana
DAVID G. REICHERT, Washington
JEAN SCHMIDT, Ohio
DON YOUNG, Alaska
(Ex Officio)

PETER A. DEFAZIO, Oregon
NICK J. RAHALL II, West Virginia
JERROLD NADLER, New York
GENE TAYLOR, Mississippi
JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, California
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, Maryland
EARL BLUMENAUER, Oregon
ELLEN O. TAUSCHER, California
BILL PASCRELL, JR., New Jersey
TIM HOLDEN, Pennsylvania
BRIAN BAIRD, Washington
SHELLEY BERKLEY, Nevada
JIM MATHESON, Utah
MICHAEL M. HONDA, California
RICK LARSEN, Washington
MICHAEL E. CAPUANO, Massachusetts
ANTHONY D. WEINER, New York
JULIA CARSON, Indiana
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, New York
MICHAEL H. MICHAUD, Maine
LINCOLN DAVIS, Tennessee
BEN CHANDLER, Kentucky
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
RUSS CARNAHAN, Missouri
ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ, Pennsylvania
JAMES L. OBERSTAR, Minnesota
(Ex Officio)

CONTENTS

TESTIMONY

	Page
Capka, J. Richard, Acting Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation	5
Gifford, Jonathan, Professor, School of Public Policy, George Mason University	18
Lewis, Tom, Professor and Author, Skidmore College	18
McCormick, Eugene R., Senior Vice President and Chairman of the Board, Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Quade and Douglas, and Chairman, American Roads and Transportation Builders Association	18

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Carnahan, Hon. Russ, of Missouri	36
Cummings, Hon. Elijah E., of Maryland	37
Defazio, Hon. Peter A., of Oregon	43
Millender-McDonald, Hon. Juanita, of California	60

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY WITNESSES

Capka, J. Richard	29
Gifford, Jonathan	44
Lewis, Tom	47
McCormick, Eugene R	53

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS: THE EISENHOWER INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Tuesday, June 27, 2006,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT AND PIPELINES,WASHINGTON, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m. in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Tom Petri [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Mr. PETRI. The hearing will come to order. My colleague and counterpart, Mr. DeFazio, is on his way and I suspect will be here by the time I finish my opening statement and he will have one as well.

We would like to welcome members and the witnesses to today's hearing, which is entitled Celebrating 50 Years: The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System. Since this is a celebration, we are going to celebrate with cake immediately following today's hearing. That is cake, not pork pie. That is good cake. I invite you all to stay and enjoy some in honor of the interstate's 50th anniversary.

The purpose of today's hearing is to provide members of the Committee with a brief history of the interstate, its impact on American culture, and the future of this vital system. On Thursday, June 29th, the interstate highway system will celebrate its 50th anniversary. In 1956, after much planning and compromise, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act, creating the interstate highway system, a project which transformed America forever.

As our Country entered the 20th century, good roads, even paved roads, weren't common. Plans for a national system of expressways were developed in 1944 by the National Highway Committee. Congress designated the 40,000 mile national system of interstate highways in 1944, but funding would not be authorized until 1952, when President Harry Truman signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1952, offering a token down payment of $25 million for the interstates.

However, it would be up to the next President, President Dwight David Eisenhower, to lead the campaign for the Nation's interstate system. President Eisenhower made it a keystone of his domestic agenda when he was elected to office in 1953. He envisaged a new, tax-based financing plan with the Federal Government bearing the largest share of construction costs. Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act without fanfare, in a hospital room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he was recovering from illness.

Today, Americans continue to reap the benefits of that legislation. The wide, relatively straight roadways in the interstate highway system were designed to be faster and safer than the two-lane roads that preceded them. In fact, the interstate system is the safest road system in America, with a fatality rate of .8 compared to 1.44 for all roads in 2004.

The interstate system, which accounts for only 1 percent of the Nation's total road mileage, but carries over 24 percent of the Nation's traffic, has come to be taken as a fact of life. Yet the interstate has become woven into the fabric of American life. In 2004, Americans traveled about 267 billion vehicle miles on the rural interstate roads, 26 billion vehicle miles on the small urban interstate roads, and over 434 billion vehicle miles on the urbanized interstate roads. Chances are, almost everyone in this room traveled here today by interstate at some point in their journey.

We have invited two panels of witnesses today. On our first panel, we welcome Mr. Richard Capka, Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. His testimony will explain how the interstate came about through President's Eisenhower's determination for a national road and the impact that the interstate has made on America's daily life.

Our second panel includes Dr. Jonathon Gifford, a professor of public management and policy at George Mason University; Dr. Tom Lewis, an English professor at Skidmore College and author of "Divided Highways," a book dedicated to the creation of the highways and what its impact has been on American life; and finally, Mr. Gene McCormick, Chairman of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

I would now ask if other members have any opening statements that they would care to make. Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, we are here this afternoon to mark this 50th anniversary of really a watershed moment in American history. Ike, President Eisenhower, knew what he was doing. And it changed, really, the scope of what the Federal Government should and could get involved in. And that has been one of the big debates in the last 50 years, what should the Government be involved in, what should it stay out of. We know that the Government should stay out of our bedrooms. But we know also that the commerce of the Nation depends on whether or not we can move people and product. So Eisenhower knew what he was doing.

The world's largest public works project, this was a 46,876 mile web of superhighways. And it has really transformed our Nation, Mr. Chairman, it has transformed our economy. There is probably not one aspect of American society that hasn't been affected by the interstates.

Its total economic impact is incalculable. Increases in travel have created a transportation system that is a sizeable element of the Country's gross domestic product. Interstates carry nearly 60,000 people per route mile per day. The economy of this Country depends on its interstates to move various goods. It is now an integral part of our homeland security network. We understand how important it is to securing the Nation.

According to the Bureau of Transportation statistics, most transportation modes showed much higher productivity growth between

1955 and 1998 than did the U.S. business sector. It is easy to see why. In the past 50 years, our population increased 1.75 times, miles driven increased 4.5 times, and registered vehicles increased 2.51 times, registered trucks increased 8.9 times. So the growth is very evident on the interstate system. It accounts for only 1 percent of the Nation's total road mileage, and carries over 20 percent of the Nation's traffic. I find that to be a startling fact. I think it is a fact.

Unfortunately, it seems we have come to the point where population growth has outstripped the system expansion and heavy use has led to congestion and frustration. Come to New Jersey. It is estimated that by 2020, New Jersey will have 1.4 million additional residents, double the amount of freight moving throughout the State, a total of 34 billion additional vehicle miles will be traveled on basically the same roads. Many of those miles are on interstate roads.

Failure to keep up with demands will result in continued congestion and gridlock. Congestion costs more than $67 billion annually in productivity. We have seen all the numbers there, how it affects productivity.

So I support a surface transportation program that seeks to reduce congestion through multiple strategies, including creating more capacity, maximizing efficiency and managing demand. The interstate system has played a vital role in our economy and social fabric, and even in the transformation of our American self-image, from a dispersed collection of States to one of a unified Nation. President Eisenhower said in 1955, "Together, the united forces of our communication and transportation systems are dynamic elements in the very name we bear: the United States. Without them, we would be a mere alliance of many separate parts."

So the interstate system really is a unifying symbol to the entire Nation. And it is good that we are talking about it today at a time when we are so divided, when we are so concerned that we are different and enunciate our differences. This is truly something to celebrate, I really believe that. We cannot plan a strategy just to pave more roads. It is incredibly important to utilize what current roads we have in the most efficient manner possible.

In an age of growing intermodalism, we must ensure that our Nation's highways are a part of a larger transportation policy which includes rail, aviation and the maritime transportation system.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, this is no small task for us to recognize. We have come a long way. The system needs repair, as all systems do. And I am glad that as a member of Homeland Security, that we have looked and examined the infrastructure of our roads and our intermodal forms of transportation and protecting that infrastructure of this Country. Because it would be unbelievably catastrophic, we see what happens in a natural disaster, and we see what happened when men and women are fools and try to kill one another in a terrorist attack.

So Mr. Chairman, this is a big day for us and we can thank a great Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, President of the United States. And I like to say, there have been so few great Republicans, I like to point them out.

[Laughter.]

Mr. PETRI. Abraham Lincoln is another one.

Mr. Coble.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Chairman, with that in mind, I would like to give the gentleman from New Jersey additional time. He is on a good roll here.

[Laughter.]

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief. I want to thank my friend from New Jersey, he very eloquently stated his case, and I think very appropriately so. I remember, Mr. Chairman, and colleagues, in one of my earlier campaigns, one of my crusty constituents came up to me. And he said, you can do me a good favor as my Congressman by seeing to it that our shores are safe, that my mail is delivered in a timely way, and keep the Government's hand and nose out of my business.

As you point out, Bill, there is a time and place for Government involvement, and there is a time and place for Government to stay out of the way. This is a situation where obviously, it was an appropriate place for the Government to be heavily involved, as my friend from New Jersey pointed out, the moving of goods, products and people from place to place.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, you live on the northern tier. I live nearer the southern tier. But we are border to border, ocean to ocean, a gigantically large, complex Country. But President Eisenhower and his supporters, both Democrat and Republican, who forged this idea into reality, brought us together. And this is indeed, again, quoting my friend from New Jersey, this is a hallmark day, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you for having scheduled this hearing, and I thank everyone in the audience for the attendance here, too. With that in mind, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Are there other opening statements? Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too want to commend the gentleman from New Jersey, because I think he is right on target. As we celebrate the 50 years of the achievements of the interstate, I would hope somebody else would have a vision to be able to take us to the next 50 years. Because I know that in my district, I represent Myrtle Beach, which has 14 million visitors a year.

Somehow or another, in that early vision of the 1950s, they left out Myrtle Beach. So there are other pockets around this Country that need attention. So Mr. Director, I would hope that you would be that person with that vision that we could maybe celebrate 50 years from now all of your achievements.

Thank you. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. I can't help but saying that you remind me of Cicero, who ended every speech by saying, and Carthage must be destroyed, except you say, and Myrtle Beach must be added to the interstate highway system.

[Laughter.]

Mr. PETRI. And I will say he got his way, eventually.

Mr. BROWN. I am still hoping, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Any other opening statements? If not, we will turn to our first panel, which is Richard Capka, the Administrator of the

Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Welcome.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD CAPKA, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CAPKA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. It is an honor for me to be here with you today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Eisenhower Interstate System.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that my full statement be admitted for the record later on.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, last week, Secretary Mineta submitted his letter of resignation to President Bush. He did so only after long and careful personal deliberations. He wanted me to convey his deep and personal professional respect to you and the members of this Committee. An extremely important part of his public career and public service was conducted with and through this Committee. You have his admiration and appreciation. He looks forward to maintaining his personal relationships with all of you throughout the future.

In his letter to the President, Secretary Mineta paid tribute to the concept of bipartisanship. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 is a very good example of a bipartisanship effort.

On the Republican side, President Dwight David Eisenhower and Senator Prescott Bush, President Bush's grandfather; and on the Democrat side, Congressman George Fallon, Hale Boggs, and Senator Albert Gore, Sr., all helped create one of the greatest public works projects in history. Since 1956, every President and each succeeding Congress has supported the Interstate system.

The importance of the Interstate system to our economy and our way of life cannot be over-exaggerated. The system was conceived at the end of the Depression and launched at the height of the Cold War. It supported one of the most expansive periods of economic growth and made America the most mobile society ever. It also made highway travel safer and more efficient.

The following is a quote from a former chief of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, Thomas McDonald, and one that I thought was particularly insightful. "The roads themselves helped us create a new wealth, in business and in industry and land values. So it was not our wealth that made our highways possible; rather, it was our highways that made our Nation's wealth possible." We could easily substitute the words "Interstate system" for "highways" and the result is why we are here celebrating today.

In his Grand Plan, President Eisenhower envisioned each level of government contributing to the upgrade of the Nation's entire road network. His goal was the creation of a system to improve safety, reduce traffic jams, increase economic efficiency and provide for the national defense. Indeed, the 1956 Act resulted in landmark changes to the connectivity of the highways in the United States and the ways in which those highways are financed. Not only did he create today's Interstate system, but it also established a Highway Trust Fund, uniformity of design and signs, and the linkage between highway user tax revenue and highway expenditures.

The Interstate system has succeeded in achieving President Eisenhower's vision. The system supports a growing economy, a strong national defense, and the vibrant American way of life. It is not only our safest highway network, but also the most flexible, as it serves changing traffic, increasing freight needs, and evolving American goals.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Interstate system, we must think about the future. We must examine the remaining service life of the Interstate highways and how to preserve in the same way for the next 50 years. We need to broaden our thinking and move forward to address today's challenges.

In many respects, our transportation system has become a victim of its own success. Our growing economy and standard of living have created a demand for travel and movement of goods that is increasingly more difficult to meet. Congestion is not an insurmountable problem, but we must embrace new solutions in order to make meaningful progress in reducing congestion.

During National Transportation Week, Secretary Mineta launched the National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network, a national congestion relief initiative designed to address the challenges ahead for our surface transportation system. This dynamic plan will maximize valuable tools Congress provided in SAFETEA-LU, to improve operation of our surface transportation system, encourage the development and deployment of new technologies and construction methods, and expand opportunities for private investment in transportation infrastructure.

One of the most critical aspects of the initiative is reducing or removing barriers to private-sector investment in the construction and operation of transportation infrastructure. It is time to take advantage of the private sector's flexibility, innovation, creativity, expertise and access to capital, while maintaining the public oversight, accountability to taxpayers, and long term strategic planning.

The Interstate system has been the backbone of our economy for 50 years. It provides a vital connection between people, goods, and services to help link the U.S. markets with those around the world. This year, we honor President Eisenhower's vision of network of highways that brought America together and strengthened the national economy.

But we also set the stage for the system's next 50 years. The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which is meeting as we speak today, is beginning to think comprehensively about the future of highway policy by reviewing current methods and exploring alternatives for investing in and managing our surface transportation systems.

Mr. Chairman, members, I want to congratulate all of you and your Committee for your insights, your exceptional leadership, and the prominent role in making our Nation's Interstate highway system the success that it is today. The U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward in shaping the next 50 years of our national highway transportation system.

Mr. Chairman, members, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify here today before you. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you for representing the Department on this celebratory occasion.

Now for questions, Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Capka, the transformations that you talked about with regard to transportation and its effect on the economy, on our social and cultural mores, are in the record. After 50 years, we have really come to a new phase in the system's development, this infrastructure that you talked about. Beyond simply building the basic infrastructure, the time has come, I think, to implement new innovations in design and management.

I have two questions. What plans does the Department have to take the Interstate system into the future? Could you tell us of those next 50 years, or 10 years, what is on the drawing board, to give folks an opportunity to envision where we are going to be a few years from now?

Mr. CAPKA. Thank you, sir, for your question. In fact, your opening statement very well articulated the challenges that we have ahead of us. Certainly, the answer is not just building additional capacity. It really isn't. It is the most effective use of the system that we do have, in other words, the operations of the highway systems. How can we maximize the throughput of the system that we already have? How can we reduce congestion in the system that we already have?

Secondly, as you also pointed out, is to make better use of the resources that are given to us. How can we make the dollars stretch further? How can we make the capital improvements last longer? How can we count on the bridges lasting longer and withstanding the ever-increasing environmental challenges that are here?

Each one of those factors will have to be contributing to the overall solution. There will be some added capacity, I think there has to be. But at the same time, there are opportunities to use the system that we have better, and to be better stewards of the resources that we are given.

Mr. PASCRELL. Your department has studied who the real culprits are in terms of congestion on our roads. And we have been talking about this for some time now. What is your conclusion about this congestion problem that we face? And am I to assume from what you said we shouldn't be looking for new roads, but trying to bring those roads that already exist into the 21st century? That is, many of these roads were built 50 years ago. And many of these roads can't take the traffic that exists now. They are unsafe. People are getting killed throughout this Country, with roads that were built many years ago.

Would you address these culprits, and would you tell us how we should be addressing the major question of congestion?

Mr. CAPKA. Mr. Pascrell, again, a very important observation and something that I think we have all locked onto. It is quite interesting, if you look back into history and the forward thinking, which kind of overlooked the importance of truck traffic, as an example. In the 1930s and 1940s when these plans were first being con-

ceived, trucks were considered to be an insignificant requirement on the Interstates. Today we know how important truck traffic is.

I think we need to be able to throttle the demand for the use of the capacity that we do have. Techniques, such as value pricing, to look at the use of our highway system, much like we looked at the use of utility systems, where in the summer time, when we are using electricity, we understand that at peak periods we are going to pay more for that electricity.

I think the same logic needs to be built into the highway systems that we have, in order for folks to use the system that we do have more rationally. That is one example. There are other examples as well, as to how we might be able to use technology to better inform the users of the system as to what they can expect, so they can avoid the challenges that may be ahead and really craft more logical travel plans to get from one point to another.

There are plenty of opportunities, I think. Transportation technology right now is proceeding to the point where it will be an enabler for us to take full advantage.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you.

Mr. Coble.

Mr. COBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Capka, your testimony mentions transportation systems improvements, such as the national 5-1-1 traveler information number that will play a vital role in better management of the system. Can that 5-1-1 number be generated only from cell phones or from conventional phones as well?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, the 5-1-1 can be called up from any phone. A cell phone obviously is one that, when folks are out and about is certainly a good technique of attaching to 5-1-1. The 5-1-1 can be called from conventional phones, too, I believe. I haven't tried it that way, but I have been told that it would work.

Mr. COBLE. All right, sir. If I may extend from my friend from New Jersey, let me ask you this question. What role do you think the Highways for LIFE program will be in the future of the interstate system?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, that is another good question. In fact, you and members of this Committee challenged us through the SAFETEA-LU legislation to pursue this Highways for LIFE program, which is designed to ensure that emerging innovation, as it pops up in one part of the Country, is rapidly deployed throughout the rest of the Nation, so that we can find better techniques, longer lasting techniques, construction materials, construction techniques, to build highways quicker, the repairs, get the orange barrels out of the roads sooner and faster, and then create a project that will last longer. In other words, kind of putting the get-in, get-out, stay-out into effect.

We see pockets of innovation everywhere. But what we would like to do is make sure that we leap forward to making those pockets of innovation standard practice. And the Highways for LIFE program will help us do that.

Mr. COBLE. Let me revisit the culprit question that my friend mentioned. Identify if you will, Mr. Capka, who are the main culprits, that contribute to congestion? Of course, congestion is one of

the obvious thorns in everyone's side as we negotiate travel from here to there and yonder.

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, we certainly like to use the word culprit, but you know, I think it is all of us who contribute to the challenges on the highway. It is those of who are dependent upon the goods and services that need to use the highways. It is those of us who are moving back and forth to work every day, during the rush hour. It is those of us going out and using the roads for family business, for relaxation,and vacationing.

We are peaking the use of the highway systems in certain locations. Certainly in the metropolitan areas,we understand the congestion. Certainly here at the Woodrow Wilson Bridge locally, the Springfield interchange, we can see how that can snarl traffic almost 24 hours a day. We need to work to improve that.

But I think, as I had mentioned earlier, we can also throttle demand and try to attenuate the peak period such that we can get the most through the system that we do have. Just a small increase in the demand can make a significant increase in the throughput of a system.

Mr. COBLE. I thank you, sir. I thank you, Mr. Chairman and yield back.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Mr. Matheson.

Mr. MATHESON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Capka, I agree that as we look forward, it is going to take a comprehensive view of how we manage congestion and safety and as Mr. Pascrell pointed out, there are some roads that are 50 years old, and at this point, they weren't designed correctly for the volume we have today. So building a new road is one component, but redesign of existing infrastructure is important.

I come from a real fast growing State, the State of Utah, and out there with the population growth, new construction is also a piece of the mix. Do you think that in terms of the way, from a Federal perspective, and we have created a situation where there is enough flexibility to address these circumstances based on what is going on in the particular local areas, so as I said for Mr. Pascrell, it may be an existing road that is way beyond where its design indicated it should be, and it needs a redesign. Whereas I have an area in southwestern Utah, fifth fastest growing county in the United States, we need some new construction. Is the flexibility built in enough for you to take this comprehensive approach?

Mr. CAPKA. Well, certainly, sir, as you and the members of the Committee have provided to us, and I would say us at the Federal level, us at the State and local level, the Federal resources to attack these problems, you have given us a lot of flexibility. It is a State-administered, federally-assisted program. And the flexibility is built into the funding to allow the States to do their own planning, the folks who are very local to the problems, to do their planning and do their programming and project execution. So I think there is an awful lot of flexibility that is provided.

At the same time, we do need a global view of the system and how the system interconnects and how the system responds nationally. I think that the Federal role in that perspective is very important, to ensure that an overall general view, overarching view, is maintained.

Mr. MATHESON. I agree with that, and that kind of leads into my next regional-specific question, having to do with the Interstate 15 corridor. While I come from the State of Utah, it is such a significant corridor between the Los Angeles area and the ports there and how we move goods and people, that stretch from L.A. up through Las Vegas. Can you give me a sense of what the opportunities may be for us to address what right now is a huge congestion problem in that particular corridor, which affects the rest of the western United States?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, another great question, and one that all of us in the Department of Transportation have been scratching our heads over, not only in the congestion that you see in Utah, but across the Nation. The Secretary's initiative that he announced back during National Transportation Week is taking a multi-pronged approach. We are looking at the congestion in the metropolitan areas, we are looking to relieve congestion at the ports that obviously feed the rest of the system. We are looking for corridor improvements where we can, as you have pointed out in the I-15 corridor, how can we move freight more effectively through those areas.

I think through partnerships and focused attention, we can address a lot of those issues. Then it is going to have to enter into the priorities of how we invest the resources that we do have.

Mr. MATHESON. And the options always cost money, unfortunately.

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, they always cost money, but you know, there are some innovative opportunities for us to take advantage of other sources of resources to invest. Whether it is the private sector or other public sector opportunities, there are, yes, sir, there are solutions to that problem.

Mr. MATHESON. Are you aware of specific thoughts about how we can deal with that stretch from L.A. up to Las Vegas? Is there a thought about expanding to additional lanes, doing a separate road, or do you know where thoughts are about how to address that specific corridor?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, I have not given personal thoughts to that specific corridor, but Utah Transportation Executive Director John Njord, who is very interested in what goes on in your State's transportation, and I have been discussing the challenges there, both from the mechanics of what need to be done, and how can we do them more efficiently. He has been on top of that.

Mr. MATHESON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. Capka, how was the original interstate funded?

Mr. CAPKA. The original Interstate, sir, in 1956, the Highway Trust Fund. And of course, leading up to the establishment of the Highway Trust Fund, there were a number of different opinions about how the resourcing would take place. In fact, the President, I think his preferred method of doing it, bonding and such, was not adopted. The Highway Trust Fund, pay-as-you-go was established along with the Act in 1956.

Mr. BROWN. And what was the assessment for that?

Mr. CAPKA. What were the assessments? Sir, I don't recall the exact assessments, but I do believe the gas tax was on the order of just a couple of cents a gallon.

Mr. BROWN. Construction cost was a little cheaper back then, wasn't it?

Mr. CAPKA. Yes, when you talk about estimates that it might take to create the system that we have back then, the estimate was somewhere just a little less than $30 billion, to create the system that was laid out in 1956. Now, of course, we know that the system in place, we did some estimates on it, perhaps $130 billion is what it has taken to put the entire system in place.

Mr. BROWN. Do you have any plans to change the existing system and how would you pay for them?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, as far as the planning, we work with the States, and there are a number of States who have recommended adding features to the Interstate system. We work with them individually. How we pay for it, I think we are just about at the max of what the 1956 Act provided in terms ofIinterstate funding. I think it was able to fund 43,000 miles of Interstate, plus or minus, and right now we are at 46,000. So the amount above 43,000 was picked up by the use of State-apportioned dollars and State funding.

Mr. BROWN. Are you looking at going back and looking at some of the original ideas to create additional revenue in order to accomplish the expansion of the system?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, we are looking at anything we can find. We want to be as innovative as we can, so nothing is taken off the table, per se, in terms of what is being considered. We are also very much looking forward to the recommendations that the commission that I spoke about earlier, that is meeting, as we speak today, it is meeting over in our NASSIF Building, we are looking to that set of commissioners, very talented folks, to help us address that problem as well. That is one of the primary deliverables from that commission.

Mr. BROWN. So you think the commission report will help in projecting planning for expanding the system?

Mr. CAPKA. Absolutely, sir.

Mr. BROWN. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Any other questions? Mr. Bishop?

Mr. BISHOP. Just one question. I am sorry I came in late.

You indicate that as part of the future strategy, you would want to encourage States to engage in or at least pursue private partnerships and that there are entities that are interested in investing significant sums of money in our infrastructure and our highway system. Is your comment in your testimony limited to just roads and other infrastructure that are State-owned or county-owned, or would you also see the Federal transportation system, the Interstate system, as a part of infrastructure that would lend itself to private investment?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, in principle, we would like the States, and all of us who have a role in shaping the surface transportation, to have the flexibility that we need--as many tools in the toolbox as available. I would not attempt to prescribe a solution for a specific State. But if a State is looking for, as an example, an opportunity to take advantage of what the private sector can offer, we would like to, at the Federal level, shape a tool that would suit the State's needs.

Now, whether it is just State owned infrastructure or Federal, we have a couple of pilot programs that were introduced in SAFETEA-LU and during TEA-21, the prior authorizing legislation, that is piloting an opportunity to toll, as an example, existing infrastructure, again on a pilot case by case basis that we are hoping to learn from. And we would like to learn as much as we can from those pilots before we take the next step.

But as far as Federal interest, if there is a Federal interest in the piece of infrastructure, that Federal interest will remain.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. No more questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Mr. Duncan?

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief, since I wasn't here earlier. We are going to have a celebration in Thursday about this 50th anniversary, and certainly the Interstate highway system has changed the face of America, and it has helped improve our economy by making the movement of people and goods much faster and easier. It is amazing to me to see what has happened, though, because I have mentioned before that when I was growing up, most families had one car, some families had two cars.

But I don't think we ever knew of any family that had more than two cars. And now you have the mother, the dad, both the teenagers, they all have vehicles, and maybe they have a pickup truck in addition to that, families have four or five vehicles sometimes. It is just amazing.

Just to give you an example, I can remember when Knoxville to Nashville, which is 185 miles, it took six hours to do that trip. Now it takes three. I remember going from Knoxville to Florida, and it took two 10 or 11 hour days to drive that. Now you can go in one long day. So there have been some wonderful things.

But I guess really what I am wondering about, the number of registered vehicles has gone way up, the number of vehicle miles traveled has gone way up. What do you see in the future? Is there any really exciting research that is going on in your office that you could tell us about? What gets you excited about the future? Are we going to see changes? The people love the Interstates, but on the other hand, you also hear people say they don't want to see the whole Country paved over. I remember when the Interstate, though, in Knoxville was just two lanes, west Knoxville. Now we are going to five lanes on each side and the traffic is horrendous.

What do you see for the future?

Mr. CAPKA. Sir, that is a great question. I think all of us and our concept of the freedom to move kind of take for granted the impact that it puts on the infrastructure that we have today. So I think in the future there is going to be a recognition that we have to use the system more wisely. And perhaps through value pricing, as an example, using the model of a utility to help us manage the use of the discrete amount of capacity that we have in our system more effectively is an appropriate way to look at that.

Secondly, I am really excited about the intelligent transportation system advancements that have been made over the years, but even more so very recently. What we are seeing in terms of 5-1-1 type communications with drivers, is an ability to call up and kind of plot your course based upon the existing conditions of the

day. So I think communications between the drivers and the infrastructure, if you will, is going to be extremely important. I think the technologies are going to make our system much safer to use. Although certainly as we pointed out, it is probably the safest system that we have, certainly in the Country, if not the world, we are still losing 43,000, 44,000 Americans every year on our highways. So safety, I see some very encouraging advancements along those lines.

But the use of technology, the prospects of all of us looking at the system that we have today as a utility, something that we have to be frugal with as we go forward, will make a difference in how we maximize the throughput capacity of our surface transportation system.

I might also say, the problem is not just one of the highways. It is a multi-modal, inter-modal kind of problem. I am very much encouraged to see, within the U.S. Department of Transportation, and other areas, a multi-modal view of how we need to address the challenges that we have in today's system.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right, well, thank you very much, and congratulations, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing today.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, Mr. Duncan.

Ms. Millender-McDonald.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and the Acting Ranking Member Pascrell. Thank you so much for bringing this very important hearing. It is great to be here together to celebrate 50 years of the Interstate highway system, a salute to the late President Dwight Eisenhower for his vision in creating this extremely important highway.

You may not be aware of this, Mr. Capka, but I created and founded the Goods Movement Caucus in the 108th Congress to examine freight issues as it relates to that. So I am particularly interested in the Interstate's impact on our Nation's economy and our ability to move goods from ports to inland States.

There is a tremendous amount of traffic, as you might well know, on the I-710 that leads from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and out to downtown rail yards and throughout the Country. While there are adverse health and environmental effects, given the tremendous amount of traffic, we cannot simply shut down one of our Nation's most important roadways.

So does the FHA devote sufficient resources to balancing our economy engine, while the health of those who live next to these railroads are taken into consideration?

Mr. CAPKA. Yes, ma'am, thank you very much for your observations there. I think you have put your finger on what I would call one of the congestion hot spots in the Nation. I know that you are very actively engaged in pursuing solutions there.

The short answer to your question is yes, we need to address both issues concurrently. I think that by addressing even the congestion and moving the goods in and out of our ports more efficiently will also solve some of the community problems. Idling trucks just don't do a whole lot for the quality of life. So what we want to do is ensure that we have a good system of moving goods in and out of the ports.

In Secretary Mineta's congestion initiative, which I believe you are familiar with, he has focused specific attention on the port problems that we do have. Also, he has focused attention on corridors, which will move the goods from the ports away from the port areas and on to different areas of the Country efficiently. So we have recognized that congestion is a multi-faceted problem that affects many people from many different perspectives. We are very, very much energized to tackling that.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Well, I thank you very much for that. The Committee recently met to discuss the impact of intermodalism, using multiple transportation methodologies to move goods. I am particularly interested in rail, because I am the creator of the Alameda Corridor, that everyone knows about. It is up to just 37 or 38 percent of its capacity. We are looking at now trying to see whether we can use rail from the docks of the ports as opposed to mini-trucks, as you know, they are going to quadruple by the year 2015, 2020, in the Los Angeles-Long Beach area.

So do you feel the FHA is engaged in studying the impacts of this trend, and hopefully we can perhaps look at rail as an alternative, especially given the environmental issues that we faced with, with idling trucks and the emission that comes from them?

Mr. CAPKA. Another great question. And yes, we are. We are working to establish national freight policy. And we use the word national rather than Federal to connote the fact that it is not just the Federal organization, Federal agency, who will be looking at this, but it is a collection of all the stakeholders: State, local level, as well as public and private sector, because as you know, the rail is a privately-owned and operated system. The rail is being taxed in terms of capacity just like the trucking industry is being taxed in terms of their capacity to move freight.

So the solution cannot be one mode, the solution has to be multimode. And rail is certainly a major player in helping us address the issue.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Thank you, so much, Mr. Capka, for being here as we celebrate 50 years.

Mr. Chairman, I will ask unanimous consent to place my full statement in the record.

Mr. PETRI. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Thank you and the Ranking Member.

Mr. PETRI. Any questions, Mr. Boozman?

Mr. BOOZMAN. None, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Shuster.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Mr. Capka, thank you for being here today. There are some members on my side of the aisle that believe that the Federal Government should do less as far as transportation, a national transportation system. I fundamentally disagree with that. I believe that our national transportation system is an essential responsibility of the Federal Government. In fact, laid out in the Constitution, the three things the Federal Government was charged with was national defense, commerce, promoting and regulating, and making the post roads. I think our national transportation system does all three of those things.

So when I look at our national transportation system, we have to either better utilize what we put through the pipe or make the pipe bigger, it seems it comes down to those two things. And you have talked here about that, both those things today. I wondered if you might get into a little more specifics about better utilization. I know we talked about the intelligent transportation. I think those things are good, and there is a place for them.

But I don't know how that, to some degree it helps, but the pipe still needs to be bigger, I think. So can you talk about other ways that we can better utilize our highway system, besides using intelligent systems?

Mr. CAPKA. The congestion problem, if we set aside added capacity in terms of added infrastructure, is also a matter of how do we better use the infrastructure that we do have. It is a matter of providing information to the users and encouraging users to use it at the most opportune time. So throttling demand I think is very important. And there is some self-leveling that occurs when folks just get so frustrated with the congestion that they go elsewhere.

But there is a different way of handling that problem. I think providing information also to the drivers and the users of the system will help them make those smart decisions. You had mentioned and I had mentioned earlier the technology that is making itself available to do just that. And also to set up a system where our newer vehicles can talk to the infrastructure and even make it safer. And certainly a safer infrastructure with fewer incidents that need to be policed off the highway, those non-recurring incidents of congestion is also a factor in how we make the system more responsive and with increased throughput.

Mr. SHUSTER. Have there been any thoughts given to reversing the flow of traffic? For instance, in Washington, D.C., everybody comes into Washington, D.C. I for the past five years thought that the Federal Government, private industry, at some point the light bulb has to go on in somebody's head and say, you know, we don't need to build our facility inside the Beltway. We can build it in southern rural Pennsylvania or rural Maryland or rural Virginia, 60 or 70 or 80 miles outside of the city of Washington, D.C. Then people can commute from rural Virginia or rural Pennsylvania into that facility or live in suburban Washington, D.C. and do a reverse commute out. Has any thought been given to that, are people talking to you about that?

Mr. CAPKA. Well, certainly in terms of land use and where business centers would develop, that is certainly part of the solution. In fact, we would certainly encourage that. And we are starting to see that in a number of different locations. As you pointed out, it is kind of a blinding flash of the obvious that some of these solutions are there.

The other is, using technology to avoid having to get up on the highways to begin with, whether it is tele-commuting or other means of virtual business processes. There are some other opportunities that are emerging in that same vein to reduce the demand for folks to all converge at the same place at the same time.

Mr. SHUSTER. And a lot of it comes down to dollars—I see my time is running out—but you keep mentioning value pricing, which leads me to believe that tolling roads is something that is on your

agenda. That would seem to me, value pricing, how do we get more money into the system, because we can come up with a lot of great new technologies, but I still think that pipe needs to be made bigger. So is that what you are talking about, value pricing, tolling roads and those types of things?

Mr. CAPKA. Sure, in value pricing the concept is that your toll is more expensive during peak hours, and less expensive during off-peak hours. So you toll for the value of what you are getting. Much like utilities and electricity in the summer time, as an example, you can help the discretion used by drivers to stay away from the peak.

Mr. SHUSTER. But that would suggest that you are saying we need to toll the Beltway around Washington, we need to add tolling lanes to it, we need to toll different, because there are really very few toll roads in this Country to be able to, with that pricing, help to administer who is going to be on the roads and when they are going to be on incentives, those types of things.

Mr. CAPKA. There are a number of States right now who are already exploring the potential for exactly that, the high occupancy toll. In fact, Virginia is one. So, as you had suggested, here in the Washington metropolitan area, Virginia is looking at variable pricing themselves.

I was just out in Denver a week or two ago and I helped the city there convert an HOV lane to include toll-paying, value pricing toll-paying drivers. So there are a number of communities that are looking to take advantage of those kinds of opportunities.

Mr. SHUSTER. Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Any other questions? Mr. Sodrel?

Mr. SODREL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for being here today, Mr. Capka.

I personally grew up on the Interstate highway system. My great-granddad was in river transportation and his son and my dad got into the trucking business. I had a chance to watch it from the ground up from the time I was a kid. I think it has had the greatest impact on the quality of life and delivering goods into the United States than anything we ever did.

But as we look forward, it seems to me we have two big challenges. One is how we make the highway and bridge assets last longer. I think we are doing some things in that regard, like cable-stay bridges are lower maintenance than the old box girder bridges, and pavement and so on. But it seems the other thing is, how do we continue to adequately fund the system? I know in our case, over a 20 year period, we doubled our miles on the same gallons, everything from aerodynamic devices to devices that lowered the parasitic friction, or loss in carrying goods down the highway, down to radial tires, gearing. We thought it was in the national energy interest, we also thought it was environmentally the right thing to do.

But what happens inadvertently is we are paying less per mile to use the highways than we used to. If the fuel tax per gallon remains fixed, which it has for some time, and you travel farther on the same amount of gallons, that on a per-mile basis we are paying less. And CAFE has caused a lot of people in private vehicles to pay less, because they are getting better fuel mileage than they did

before. We also have alternative, renewable sources of energy, electric cars, we have all kinds of things that will degrade the amount of revenue available to maintain roads and bridges, while the construction is traveling up with the per gallon cost of fuel.

So I guess my question is, is everything on the table here as the commission goes forward, including the fact that we spend about 22 percent of the Highway Trust Fund on things other than bridges and highways? And I don't know if we can afford that luxury any longer. I would just like comments on everything we are looking at to try to make sure we have adequate revenue to keep the system operable.

Mr. CAPKA. Great question, sir, and you put your finger on a number of the challenges that we are facing. Certainly finding the revenues that are required to support what needs to be done in the future, and certainly the economy is going to demand that we have the infrastructure to maintain its position in a global economy here in the future.

The commission is tackling the full gamut of issues, with needs. What are the needs of the system, what is the Federal role, what is the State role, what are other roles that could be played by public and private sector entities? What should the Federal investment be, what should it cover? And then how do we raise the resources and what should be given to those practitioners who are responsible for delivering the needs? What tools need to be in the tool boxes?

All of those, I think, are in play. I sat through yesterday's session with the commission and this morning, and those are the issues that are being teed up right now for the next year's worth of deliberative work there.

Mr. SODREL. Just kind of a follow-up, are we doing any experimenting on road construction techniques or materials that will last longer or be lower maintenance over the long term as well?

Mr. CAPKA. Absolutely. That is key to accomplishing what you suggested, to make bridges last longer, to make the pavements last longer, so we can be better stewards of the dollars that we are investing today. Absolutely.

One of the reasons that we are very interested in sharing the research and technology programs that we have throughout the highway community remains strong, and that we have a Federal role in pursuing the advanced research which uncovers the breakthroughs in materials and techniques that will be very important.

The Highways for LIFE program that you and the members of the Committee provided to us in the SAFETEA-LU legislation is another example of doing exactly that, finding the pockets of excellence, great ideas and innovation, and making it standard practice. So when materials are shown to be better materials, we can integrate that into the standard practice very, very efficiently, and everyone take advantage of it.

Mr. SODREL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. The commission was mentioned, and I guess they met this morning. I just thought I would ask you before you leave if you could tell us how they are doing. As you know, a lot of people are all looking forward to them doing their work, and independent, and hopefully thinking even if it is not conventional

ideas, coming up with some new ideas, are helping to explore options as we go forward with funding the Federal system, and defining its scope. If the resources continue to shrink relative to our economy at the Federal level, then we are going to somehow figure out how to focus our effort better, or we are going to basically thin things down and not get much value, or as much value for what we are spending.

Would you care to comment on how they are doing so far?

Mr. CAPKA. Yes, sir, I would be delighted to do that. I have participated at least as an observer, and also a briefer, during the first two sessions of the commission. I would tell you that each one of the commissioners is engaged and engaged very intently. I gave a presentation yesterday on my views of the surface transportation from a highway perspective, and had some very insightful questions addressing exactly, sir, the questions that you are raising today.

How are we going to make the system as responsive as it needs to be in the future? What are the roles of the team players, at the State level, the local level, the Federal level? How are we going to raise the required requisite resources to ensure that we are able to handle the challenges and the requirements of the system in the future?

All the questions that are being teed up today and yesterday were devoted to bringing all the commissioners up to a common level of understanding of what data exists, where the challenges are and I believe the commission is working very well to tackle the mission that it has over the next 12 months.

Mr. PETRI. Well, thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony, and you mentioned at the beginning of your remarks the fact that our Secretary of Transportation is retiring. I know I speak for our entire Committee, as one of his former colleagues, serving under his leadership, that we thank him for his service and we all wish him very happy retirement and success in the next chapter.

Mr. CAPKA. Thank you, sir. I will pass it on to him. I have a feeling he is looking over my shoulder right now.

Mr. PETRI. All right, thank you.

The next panel, Dr. Jonathon Gifford, professor at George Mason University; Tom Lewis, professor and author, Skidmore College; and Gene McCormick, Chairman of the American Roads and Transportation Builders Association.

Gentlemen, we welcome you. We thank you for the prepared remarks that you have submitted for this occasion, and we would invite you to summarize those remarks for the Committee on the record, approximately five minutes, beginning with Dr. Gifford.

TESTIMONY OF JONATHAN GIFFORD, PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY; TOM LEWIS, PROFESSOR AND AUTHOR, SKIDMORE COLLEGE; EUGENE R. MCCORMICK, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, PARSONS, BRINKERHOFF, QUADE AND DOUGLAS, AND CHAIRMAN, AMERICAN ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. GIFFORD. Thank you for the opportunity to appear here this afternoon on this very important occasion. The planning, design

and construction and ongoing renewal of the interstate highway system together are a really extraordinary accomplishment in the history of our Nation. The system is the envy of the world, and it is being emulated today around the world, from China to India to the expanded European Union.

I would like to focus my remarks today on the benefits of the interstate highway system and on the lessons we can learn from it. First, safety impacts have already been mentioned, and that is perhaps its most important legacy. As shown in this chart, the red line on the top is the fatality rate on non-interstate highways. The blue line on the bottom is the fatality rate for interstate highways, starting in the 1960s and going up until recently.

As you can see, the fatality rate was less than 3 per 100 million vehicle miles in the 1960s, about half the rate of other highways. Over time it has declined, as mentioned earlier, to one death per 100 million vehicle miles today.

Another important effect of the interstate is that it demonstrated the distinctive design features of the interstate system for use off the system, such as medians between opposing lanes, grade-separated interchanges, and high design speeds. And that demonstration effect also brings safety benefits off the system.

Together, these on-and-off-system effects have saved tens of thousands of lives over the last half century. That is a tremendous legacy.

The second legacy is the effect which has already been mentioned on American lifestyles. The interstate development occurred during a time when the Nation was engaged in a massive shift of housing, retail and employment to the suburbs. Demand for suburbanization arose from many sources, besides the interstate, including the G.I. Bill, G.I. housing loans, mortgage interest deductibility and so forth. All of these combined to contribute to America's suburbanization. But it is fair to say that the interstate was a powerful force in shaping how much and how quickly suburbanization occurred.

Today the majority of Americans reside in suburbs. The interstate system is an integral part of everyday life. Almost every American household has a range of choices of where to work, live, play, study and worship that would not be possible without the interstate system.

The third legacy is that the interstates facilitated a fundamental transformation of our freight and distribution system. Truck utilization has soared almost 200-fold in the last 50 years. That is a rate of increase of 12 percent per year for a period of a half century. Today, virtually every item in our workplaces and households has reached us via the interstate system.

This shift to truck-based distribution allows our economy to have the world's most efficient supply chain management system. Our total logistics costs have declined from 16 percent of our national product to 10 percent, 16 percent in 1980 to 10 percent today, or recently in 2001, at the same time as our freight volumes have exploded.

The interstate has also taught us some important lessons. First, it has taught us that large scale social and technological systems like the interstate are complex and unpredictable. Many of the consequences of the interstate system, both positive and negative,

were not anticipated. As Mr. Capka indicated earlier, the Bureau of Public Roads predicted in 1937 that trucks would never carry a significant portion of our Nation's freight because they would be inexorably squeezed by rail on the bulk commodity side, and air freight on the high value freight side.

Mayors clamored for urban interstates as a way to revitalize their downtowns. Transit industry owners believed that their primary concern was being exempted from motor vehicle taxes.

Reality turned out to be dramatically different. So going forward, we really need to be humble about our ability to predict consequences, and that supports research and careful monitoring and measurement as we go forward in order to continue to make our programs benefit the economy.

The second lesson we have learned from half a century of interstate building is how much we value community preservation, social justice and environmental stewardship. In the early years, the interstate had serious adverse impacts on many older cities, especially on poor and disadvantaged communities. Our urban renewal policy of using interstate highway investments to remove blighted areas displaced tens of thousands of poor African-American citizens. We also sought to build interstates through parks and environmentally sensitive spaces.

Congress soon responded with landmark environmental legislation such as the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969. These are laws that continue to shape our policies today.

Finally, and most importantly, the interstate shows that the development of a carefully engineered and planned system can bring extraordinary benefits to our Nation. This achievement arose from strong Federal leadership for planning and financing that is almost unprecedented in our 230-year history. The Nation has spent $420 billion in 2001 dollars on the interstate system, $370 billion from Federal sources.

The system development has adhered generally to the 42,000 mile network that was laid out between the 1930s and the mid-1950s. For almost four decades, Congress was satisfied to focus on building the interstate as planned at that time, and special projects were a rarity. No other system in our history, with the possible exception of the air traffic control system, has commanded such long-lasting Federal leadership and support.

So in closing, let me say that these legacies and these lessons make a strong case for strong and continued attention to the stewardship and renewal of the interstate that we have built, as well as careful consideration of options for expanding and adapting it to the challenges and realities of the 21st century. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you.

Dr. Lewis.

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you very much for inviting me this afternoon.

At 11:15 on Monday morning, July 7th, 1919, a 3-mile caravan of Army motorcycles, cars, and trucks, 260 enlisted men, 35 officers and a 15-piece van provided by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, set out from Lafayette Square in Washington for Union Square in San Francisco, 3,000 miles away. It took 62 days for those soldiers to cross the Country. They averaged but five miles

an hour. Some days they went as few as three miles. Breakdowns and accidents were frequent. In the Sierra, they lost a truck into a steep ravine.

One 28 year old Army major on the trip described it as a journey through darkest American with truck and tank. The condition of the roads ranged from average to non-existent. America, that officer said in his report to superiors, must have better roads.

Thirty-seven years later, on July 29th, 1956, that Army officer, Dwight David Eisenhower, now President of the United States, signed into law the legislation creating the interstate highway system. That signature changed the landscape of America and helped to bring about the extraordinary economic engine that has enabled this nation to remain the preeminent power in the world. The story of the interstates has deep roots in our desire for freedom and movement, and our knowledge that we are at liberty to resolve our destiny in our vast landscape.

For centuries, we Americans have relentlessly celebrated our mobility. Our forebears from Europe and other continents came to invent and reinvent themselves in unfamiliar places. Eight decades after they formed the Union, they took pains to manumit those whom they had brought in chains, and in a limited way, granted the newly emancipated the freedom to go forth and invent themselves also.

Across the landscape of our continent, we Americans have left the imprint of our movements, paths, roads, turnpikes and canals in the 18th century, railroad tracks in the 19th and an ever-increasing number of wide roads and streamlined highways in the 20th. Today, 50 years after President Eisenhower signed the legislation creating the interstate highway system, we can see how these roads have changed our landscape and our lives.

If you go west across the Nation on Interstate 40 from Wilmington, North Carolina, you will pass through the tobacco country of Greensboro and Winston-Salem, the Great Smokey Mountains, the city of Nashville, home to country music, Memphis, the city of W.C. Handy and Elvis, fireworks shacks in Arkansas, oil derricks in Oklahoma, the remnants of old Route 66, the parched, dusty towns of the Texas Panhandle, the Continental Divide in New Mexico, the banded purple, scarlet and pink tints of the Painted Desert in Arizona, and the desolate blur of California before reaching the end of the interstate at Barstow.

And along the way, you will pass 36 KOA campgrounds, 37 Holiday Inns, about 100 Wal-Marts, 46 Burger Kings and 82 McDonalds. That is a Big Mac for every 31 miles of interstate.

Think of where our economy would be today if there were no interstate highway system. There are approximately 16,000 exits on more than 40,000 miles of interstate. With the interstate highway, the Federal Government created thousands of economic opportunities for development at each of those places. Those exits have functioned in the same way that stops on the railroad did in the 19th century, but with one difference: the railroads offered but a few hundred stops, or economic opportunities.

In building the interstate highway system, we revealed on that great stage all our glory and sometimes our meanness, all our vision and sometimes our shortsightedness. We revealed all of our

democracies, virtues and sometimes its failings. As the American poet Walt Whitman said more than a century ago, "Oh, public road, you express me better than I can express myself."

So let us celebrate all that Dwight David Eisenhower achieved with his signature on June 29th, 1956. Though I doubt he realized how momentous that occasion was, the President approved a bill that ranks with Social Security, the G.I. Bill of Rights, and civil rights legislation as the most important bills in the 20th century.

Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you.

Mr. McCormick.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Representative Bishop, members of the Subcommittee. My name is Gene McCormick. I am the Senior Vice President and Chairman of the Board of Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Quade and Douglas, a planning, engineering and construction management firm. I am appearing before you today as the 2006 Chairman of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

Nearly 50 years ago, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a law authorizing the construction of the interstate highway system. It was the greatest domestic achievement of his presidency. It also represented the fulfillment of the 1901 vision of ARTBA founder, Horatio Earle, who advocated a federally-built capital-connecting government highway system, which he said would connect every State capital with each other and our Nation's capital here in Washington. ARTBA is very pleased to be a part of this Subcommittee's observation of the 50th anniversary of this milestone legislation.

Now that the core interstate highway system is complete, there are those who believe our work is complete. Mr. Chairman, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, much remains to be done to assure we protect our past investment for future generations. The interstate highways are the foundation of our Nation's surface transportation system. Traffic demand continues to grow. In the last decade alone, the amount of travel on the interstate highways grew more than 36 percent. During that same decade, truck traffic nearly doubled.

All of this is putting great strain on our network of interstate highways. And according to the latest report from the Texas Transportation Institute, 59 percent of roads in urban areas are congested during peak periods each day, compared to only 34 percent 20 years ago. The amount of peak period travel on major urban roads under congested conditions has grown from 32 percent to 67 percent.

The cost of that congestion is estimated at nearly $70 billion a year in lost productivity and is the equivalent of $520 per year per capita in our largest 75 metropolitan areas alone.

This kind of travel demand also takes a toll on the physical condition of the interstate highway system. According to the U.S. DOT, an average annual investment of $18.8 billion in 2002 dollars would be necessary to just maintain current physical and operating conditions on the interstate highways over the next 16 years. And this figure does not take into account the rising cost of highway

construction materials and labor, which have increased by over 20 percent in the last two years alone.

By contrast, all levels of government invested only $15.1 billion in 2003 and $14.7 billion in 2004 on interstate highways. This represents a gap between investment levels and system needs of between $4 billion and $5 billion annually. While we can't predict how much will be invested in interstate highways in future years, the amount to maintain current physical conditions and levels of congestion will grow from $20 billion in 2004 to $29 billion in 2015, far more than is being currently invested.

This Subcommittee's interest in the interstate highway system and today's hearing is certainly a positive sign that the needs of our interstate highways will be met in the future. As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the system, this milestone achievement provides an opportunity to launch the much-needed public dialogue on how the challenges facing the interstates and other components of our Nation's transportation network should be addressed.

We clearly need to renew our vision of the interstate system, and in fact, our surface transportation system. In my judgment, we are losing global competitiveness on our surface transportation system today. Yet we can look back at the interstate system and see three key lessons, key elements that have served us well. One was the creation of the Highway Trust Fund. Secondly, the partnership between the Federal, State and private sector in delivering the project, the interstate system. And thirdly, a multi-year reauthorization period for Federal highway legislation.

We at ARTBA are committed to maintain that partnership role with you and with the public at large as we move forward upon celebrating the 50th anniversary, and create that vision for the future. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, and now we will turn to questions, beginning with Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for Mr. McCormick. You make reference to the challenges that we must confront in the future. At the risk of oversimplifying our principal challenge, it would seem to me, would be to identify sufficient resources to both maintain the system that we have and in fact expand it or improve it.

When we began the process of looking at the highway reauthorization, we began originally at I think $375 billion over six years. The notion was that we were going to increase the gasoline tax, so as to increase proceeds into the trust fund. We backed away from that, as you know, we ultimately passed $284 billion over six years.

In terms of the funding challenge that we have, what is my perspective, what advice can you give us as public policy makers? Is the gasoline tax something that ought to be seriously considered? Should we be more aggressive in terms of pursuing public-private partnerships, such as are currently being pursued in some cases? Is bonding really another way to go? What is your thought on that?

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Representative Bishop. It is probably a little bit of both, quite frankly, in my judgment. Yes, I do believe that there is a role for some increased tolling, some increased public-private participation and partnership. But fun-

damentally--and Committee members have mentioned it earlier--the Federal role in terms of providing an interstate-like system for our national, both interstate commerce and defense, purposes seems to me to clearly suggest a strong Federal role.

And yes, I do believe the current mechanism of the gas tax, as politically unattractive as that may be right now, is probably part of the future. But also in the longer term, there are probably other funding mechanisms, but still founded upon the concept of a user fee that I think has served us so well over the years.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. No more questions.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Are there questions on this side? Mr. Brown?

Mr. BROWN. Mr. Chairman, if I might, I heard you mention user fee. Is that, do you think that is a viable alternative to tolls on the interstates?

Mr. MCCORMICK. I didn't mean to suggest, Mr. Brown, that I thought the best approach was to toll all the interstates. There may be certain areas, certain corridors, certain conditions, certain interests at the local and State level that make that a viable alternative. I think it would take quite a public awareness campaign, if you will, in terms of a broad application of tolls nationwide on the entire system.

Mr. BROWN. Well, how would you feel about enhancing or raising the Federal gas tax?

Mr. MCCORMICK. I do believe in user fees. The cost that we as individual users of the system pay today is an extremely good bargain. The 18.4 cents per gallon Federal gas tax, which represents roughly 6 to 7 percent of the total price of fuel that we pay today seems to me to be a bargain. Of course, that gas tax has not been increased in 13 years, if I recall correctly. And we have seen highway construction costs increase about 20 percent in the last 2 years alone.

So yes, I think we collectively need to develop a broader public awareness of the value that is derived from that Federal gas tax and create the support for considering a user fee increase.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. Chairman, I know that this is the last panel before the cake, but could I give those other two guys a chance to respond to that same question, if they have a comment?

Mr. PETRI. Sure.

Mr. LEWIS. I would like to respond. To begin with, in 1956, the gasoline tax was raised 3 cents, I believe you might have been the gentleman who asked that question earlier this afternoon. The Federal gasoline tax stood at 3 cents.

If you cost that out in 2006 dollars, that is equal to 22 cents. At the moment, our gasoline tax is 18.4 cents. We have been falling behind in the gas tax revenues in terms of real dollars charged for a gallon of gas since probably for the last 15 years. This to me seems a compelling argument for raising taxes.

I actually think that Congress should raise taxes a lot, lot more. You will see in my extended remarks, which I believe will be put into the record, that they should be significantly raised. I think that the tax system should be used for two things: first, for building and rebuilding the interstates and maybe getting an interstate

to Myrtle Beach, I believe you are the gentleman from Myrtle Beach.

Mr. BROWN. Amen.

[Laughter.]

Mr. LEWIS. I can give you a historical reason why you didn't get a road to Myrtle Beach, and that was because in 1956 or whenever it was planned, the system was planned a little earlier, probably Myrtle Beach did not have 50,000 people. And the interstate connected communities of 50,000. But now maybe you deserve one.

My point is that Myrtle Beach, of course, needs an interstate, but the rest of the interstates need to be maintained and rebuilt. And the second point that I would make is that part of that gasoline tax, very much increased gasoline tax, should be put into the seeking of an alternative fuel source, and alternative energy sources. That would have the effect ultimately, I believe, of diminishing our reliance upon foreign oil.

And by the way, oil is the four-letter word here and it hasn't been mentioned this afternoon. I think I have just been the first person to say it. But it is a very serious issue.

Mr. BROWN. I think one issue that we will be taking up this week on the House floor is the offshore drilling, which would at least allow some of the royalty fees to remain on the coast where those wells would be put. That could be an alternative source for revenue for transportation.

And I do thank you, my time is expired.

Mr. GIFFORD. May I respond at this time? I would say two things in response to the gentleman's question. One, it was a very difficult battle to put together the highway trust fund in 1956. There was an extended period of 12 years after World War II, where we wrangled over how to pay for the interstate system. And there was something compelling about the interstate, there was something compelling about the vision of this system that would allow you to travel from coast to coast without a traffic signal that I think captured the imagination, not only of the American public, but also members of Congress and the Executive Branch and the States.

So there was a broad-based coalition that was extremely committed to the completion of the interstate. And as I mentioned in my statement, up until the 1990s we had a program that was basically committed to building out a map that had been drawn in the 1950s. I think today the commissions that Mr. Capka mentioned are wrestling with is, is there a vision going forward that will carry us the next 50 years. And I think there isn't yet an emergent vision that will fulfill that role. I think until you have something that is compelling to the American people, you will have difficulty overcoming the resistance to raise taxes and make tough choices.

One of the beauties of the interstate system was that it was this 42,000 mile system that was conceived in 1956 and finalized in 1956. Yet, one of the weaknesses is that that map was drawn in 1956 and places like Myrtle Beach and other places around the Country that weren't big enough at that time to merit an interstate connection have been excluded from it.

So there was an idea that we could finish our interstate and then we had done our work. But you will never finish the economy. It

is an ongoing enterprise that requires continued support. Building the public commitment to that is a real challenge.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Platts.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to add my words of thanks for your hosting this hearing and for the presenters. My daily service here kind of embodies the benefits of the interstate system. I commute from central Pennsylvania every day, just under 100 miles, Interstate 83, 295, 95, 495, 695 and thank goodness for the interstate system. It allows me to be a member back in my district every day and hands-on dad to my 10 year old and 7 year old sons.

I appreciate the efforts of our panelists in helping to raise the awareness of not just maintaining but improving and expanding the interstate system to the realities of 50 years later in 2006. Hopefully we will have success as we go forward in finding the means of achieving this very important goal. So thanks again for your presentations, and Mr. Chairman, thanks for your efforts in leading the charge here. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you.

Mr. Diaz-Balart, any questions?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. No thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. If not, just before we conclude, I will give each of you a chance to make a concluding remark, if you would care to, to the Committee. I feel, as I think maybe some others in this room, do, a little bit of a child in this. I got my driver's license in 1956. And before that, I traveled with grandparents and so on across the Country. The roads and conditions were far different than they are today. I think there was one interstate type system, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and the Garden State Parkway. Some things were done with a little bit of a different concept than our interstate system and are in the process even now of being rebuilt.

But this clearly is something that has transformed our Country and is vital. Its continued success and maintenance and modernization and expansion as the economy and population shift are vital to our well-being as a Country and to our efficiency as a Country and our international competitiveness as a Country.

I think there was some testimony to the effect that costs of logistics in the United States has dropped from 15 percent to 10 percent. We have had some recent testimony that that has leveled out and in fact, is now in the process of reversing itself. We have a huge international competitive edge in part because of logistics efficiency. We take it for granted in the atmosphere here.

But you go to Europe, their road system cost of transporting goods is much higher. You go to India or China, it is still much more expensive than we are here in the United States. So we undergird our high standard of living through efficiency in a variety of areas, including the interstate system. Maintaining that and stopping that trend from going down and reversing it and having it continue to be efficient and more efficient is a major challenge.

I don't know if any of you have any comments at all on that, any explanation as to why it has started to go down or if you would care to dispute or expand on my kind of little ode to the interstate highway system. But we thank you for your testimony and will give you a chance to make a concluding remark.

Mr. McCORMICK. Well, Mr. Chairman, be assured I will not dispute any of the statements you made, because they are completely accurate. I believe--and I have been blessed--I have worked over 40 years in my profession. The interstate system has always been a part of that profession. I had a chance to work at State DOT level, Federal Government and the private sector. It is that partnership and it is the fact, in my judgment, that it has been an effective capital investment program that has served our Country so well over the last 50 years.

And investment is a never-ending process, as the point was made a moment ago. If we look to the future and our global competitiveness, the interstate system was planned in the 1930s and 1940s. The program has been such a success it has changed the economic structure of this Country. And it is time for us to create the vision that supports change and renews our effort for the future.

Mr. GIFFORD. Directly on the Chairman's point on our logistics costs, let me just quote some statistics that I looked up before coming in today. If you want to measure the efficiency of our transportation system, one measure is transportation costs as a percentage of the value of goods transported. So what fraction of delivered goods is tied up in transportation costs?

In the U.S., it is between 3 and 4 percent. In the EU 15 countries, it is 5 to 6 percent. In Canada, it is 4 to 6 percent, depending on the measure. So we are significantly below, and I think that provides competitive advantage in our economy and also improves the quality of life of our citizens.

You invited us to make a concluding point, I have just finished a sabbatical at the Transportation Research Board for the last nine months. One of the things I was looking at was the interstate system, what I call an exceptional system, and looking back in our history over 230 years to ask whether there are other examples where the Federal Government stepped in and took actions like this.

I mentioned air traffic control as one example, but there really aren't any other examples. It is very unusual to have such strong Federal leadership in what really is a centrally planned system that was designated and closely coordinated with the States, but had a very strong central, Federal role. I have called it un-American in a way. I was explaining it once to some Chinese central planners who didn't understand our electric power system, which grew from the bottom up. The interstate system they understood immediately.

And it is very unusual in our history as a Country for the Federal Government to take such a strong role and to centrally plan a system. I think the takeaway message is the benefits that have come from that have been extraordinary. It is not a perfect system by any manner or means. We learned a lot along the way, we made some mistakes.

But if you look at it as a system, there is almost nothing else in our economy that has had such a strong centrally planned, centrally organized role. Going forward, we have to think carefully about whether we will be able to replicate that. Maybe we can. Maybe we should. But it is a challenge. It is a challenge in these days of scarce Federal resources, retirement entitlements and so

forth. It is a real challenge going forward to say whether we will be able to replicate that achievement.

Mr. LEWIS. First, thank you very much for your remarks, Mr. Chairman. And thank you also again for inviting me to participate.

I do want to, since I am the historian on the group here, to tell you a couple of things, remind us of a couple of things. In 1972, that was the year that the original interstate was expected to be finished, to be completed. It took a good deal longer, as we of course know. But I think that is an important thing for us to understand.

And as the historian, I also want to just pay some maybe homage to Representative Fallon, who was a part of this Committee many years ago, and who was so important in the creation of the interstate highway system. And he is one of the great ones who should be remembered.

But then as well, I think it is important for us on this moment, as we are celebrating the interstate highway system, to remember the extraordinary achievements of the engineers who created this, the members of AASHTO, what is now AASHTO. All of these State and regional planners and engineers did an extraordinary job. We are in their debt, because they have helped to make America what it is today in terms of its strength.

This Congress, the people, representatives in this room are the ones who obviously have the power to create these systems, but the men and women who brought it together and instituted it really deserve our thanks as well.

And finally I want to just say, looking to the future, that you all, the representatives on this Committee and our representatives in Congress, have an extraordinary responsibility. Because the interstate system has been so successful and has created the economic power of this Country and helped maintain the economic power of this Country, you have an extraordinary responsibility to chart a course to keep that system not only healthy but also to expand it.

And so thank you very much.

Mr. PETRI. That is an appropriate note on which to end this hearing. We thank you for your contribution. The hearing is adjourned and there is cake to celebrate. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:43 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

Statement of
J. Richard Capka, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
United States Department of Transportation
Before the Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Hearing on Celebrating 50 Years:
The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System
June 27, 2006

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you at today's hearing on celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

The creation of the Interstate System is one of the greatest public works projects in history. The importance of the Interstate System to our economy cannot be exaggerated. President Eisenhower wrote the following in his memoirs: "...more than any single action by the government since the end of the war, this one would change the face of America. Its impacts on the American economy – the jobs it would produce in manufacturing and construction, the rural areas it would open up – was beyond calculation." This year is an opportunity to recognize the importance of transportation to our economy and our way of life. It is also an opportunity to look ahead to the next 50 years.

Origins of the Interstate System

In the very early part of the last century, national highway policy was focused on getting farmers out of the mud and getting their produce to market. The Federal-aid highway program began in 1916 with that concept in mind, but it lacked a national focus. In 1921, the focus shifted as Congress reshaped the program to restrict Federal-aid to a limited, designated system totaling no more than 7 percent of each State's roads, with three-sevenths of this system being "interstate in character." Up to 60 percent of the funds could be used on these interstate roads as the Nation embarked on construction of its first interstate system—the name often used to describe it. By the late 1930s, there was a paved network of two-lane roads across the Nation, but its design and operation were inadequate for growing traffic volumes.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1938 directed the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), the predecessor of the Federal Highway Administration, to study the feasibility of a toll-financed system of three east-west and three north-south superhighways. The 1939 study, entitled *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, rejected the idea of a toll network, but proposed a system of toll-free interregional highways, with connections to and around

cities. The network of highways would meet the needs of increasing automobile traffic and the requirements of national defense in time of war.

A subsequent report to Congress, entitled *Interregional Highways*, helped shape the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, in which Congress directed the designation of a 40,000 mile "National System of Interstate Highways" by joint action of State highway agencies, subject to the approval of BPR. In 1947, BPR designated 37,681 miles of principal highways, including 2,882 miles of urban thoroughfares carrying the main line through cities. Construction of this system began in 1947, but without increased Federal support, many States did not pursue construction. Furthermore, road design standards were not uniformly applied. What was missing was a program to fund and build an interstate system with a uniform design.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1952 provided some support for the system by authorizing $25 million with 50/50 Federal-State participation. However, when President Eisenhower assumed office in 1953, only 6,000 miles had been completed at a cost of $955 million.

President Eisenhower's Vision

President Dwight D. Eisenhower understood the value of roads. In 1919, he was aboard the U.S. Army's first transcontinental convoy, a two-month journey from Washington, DC, to San Francisco, CA, to assess the readiness of military vehicles to make such a long trip and to promote good roads. The trip convinced the participants, which included military personnel, road advocates, and members of the press, of the country's need for better roads. During and after World War II, the future President traveled on Germany's Autobahn network of rural superhighways. President Eisenhower later noted "The old convoy had started me thinking about good, two-lane highways, but Germany had made me see the wisdom of broader ribbons across land."

To address the Nation's highway needs and build upon the progress of the 1930s and 1940s, President Eisenhower developed a "Grand Plan." The "Grand Plan" is sometimes misunderstood as simply recommending the construction of the Interstate System; however, President Eisenhower's vision was far grander. The "Grand Plan" envisioned each level of government – Federal, State, county, and municipal – contributing to the upgrade of the Nation's entire road network over a 10-year period. The goal of the "Grand Plan" was a system to improve safety, reduce traffic jams, reduce traffic-related litigation, increase economic efficiency, and provide for the national defense. President Eisenhower appointed General Lucius D. Clay to head a committee, now known as the Clay Committee, to further develop the plan.

In 1955, President Eisenhower submitted the Clay Committee's report to Congress, along with accompanying legislative proposals for financing construction of the Interstate System over a 10-year period. Despite widespread support for the concept, Congress rejected the Clay plan, which entailed $25 billion in bonds and redirection of the gas tax to retire the debt. When legislation failed in 1955 because of financing issues,

observers predicted that such a sweeping and costly plan would not be passed in the presidential election year of 1956.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956

President Eisenhower continued to urge approval of his legislative plan and worked with Congress to reach compromises that made approval possible. On June 26, 1956, Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (1956 Act). President Eisenhower, who had fought so hard for his vision, was in the final stages of recovery from surgery at Walter Reed Medical Center when he signed the Act on June 29, 1956, with no fanfare, no statement, and no photograph of the moment.

Despite the lack of ceremony, the 1956 Act resulted in landmark changes to the connectivity of highways in the U.S. and the way in which those highways are financed. Congress created today's Interstate System by expanding the system to 41,000 miles. The Act called for uniformity of design and signs to eliminate surprises that could lead to crashes. An extended authorization period was established to add certainty to the process to enable States to plan major highway projects to be completed over several years. The legislation also created a linkage between highway user tax revenue and highway expenditures.

The Highway Trust Fund was created as a dedicated revenue source for the Interstate System. Revenue from the Federal gas and other motor-vehicle user taxes was credited to the Highway Trust Fund to pay the Federal share of Interstate construction and all other Federal-aid highway projects. In this way, the Act guaranteed construction of all segments on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, thus satisfying one of President Eisenhower's primary requirements -- that the program be self-financing and not contribute to budget deficits. The 1956 Act set the Federal share for Interstate construction at 90 percent in recognition of the National scope of the project.

Impacts of the Interstate System

The Interstate System succeeded in achieving President's Eisenhower's vision of connecting our Nation. From the early years, highway engineers across the country built Interstate highways to match geographic and other challenges. The design of the Interstate System has not been static. The public and private partnerships that created the System adapted the highways to operational and safety experiences, criticism from the environmental community and safety advocates, and advances in bridge, pavement, and tunnel technologies. Through creativity and engineering expertise, each State built highways that, while uniform in some respects, were also unique to their setting. The close partnerships between Federal and State agencies and other stakeholders played an important role in establishing standards in design, operations, and safety.

Fifty years after the inception of the program, President Eisenhower's legacy has made America the most mobile society in history. Although the Interstate System comprises only 1 percent of the Nation's highways, it carries 24 percent of the Nation's

traffic. In 2004, Americans traveled approximately 267 billion vehicle miles on rural Interstate highway, 26 billion vehicle miles on "small urban" Interstate highways, and over 434 billion vehicle miles on urbanized Interstate highways. This mobility has lead to an improved quality of life – more job opportunities and expanded choice on where to live.

The construction of the Interstate System also significantly expanded the reach of efficient truck movement. Highways are a key conduit for freight movement in the U.S., accounting for 71 percent of total freight transportation by weight and 80 percent by value in 1998. Freight transportation supports local businesses, interstate commerce, international trade, and provides Americans with access to goods and services. Today, transportation is woven into the economic fabric of the nation, and the Interstate System played a large role in establishing its importance.

One of the primary reasons for building the Interstate System was to improve the safety of the highway users: drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Over the past 50 years, the Interstate System has done much to make highway travel safer and more efficient. Relative safety is measured by the "fatality rate" (fatalities per 100 million miles traveled, a measure used so data can be compared as traffic volumes change). The Interstate System is the safest road system in the country, with a fatality rate of 0.8—compared with 1.44 for all roads in 2004. This statistic is particularly noteworthy given that Interstate highways carry 26 times the traffic per mile as the rest of the road system.

When the Interstate construction program began in 1956, the national fatality rate was 6.05. This improvement in safety has been the result of many factors working together: the shifting of traffic onto the safer Interstate highways and technological advances in safety, such as wider shoulders; slid-resistant pavements; better guardrail, signing, and markings; better sight distances; and breakaway sign posts and utility poles. In addition, many other factors have contributed to improved safety on the Nation's highway system, including new vehicle safety features, such as safety glass, padded interiors, safety belts and air bags; programs to reduce impaired and aggressive driving; and the combined, coordinated efforts of many private organizations and public agencies working together to make the Nation's highways ever safer. Safer vehicles operating on safer highways also require safer driver behavior in order to deliver significant safety benefits. The most important life-saving action every State should take to achieve this is to pass a primary safety belt law. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) resulted in the enactment an incentive grant program to encourage States to pass primary safety belt laws. Buckling up is not complex -- it's simple, it works, and it saves lives.

The 1956 Act officially named the Interstate System the "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways." (In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed legislation that would rename the Interstate System to honor President Eisenhower.) This name recognized that national defense was part of the justification for constructing the Interstate system. Indeed, the Interstate System has provided for defense access and

readiness, most recently with the mobilization prior to Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Interstate System supports a growing economy, a strong national defense, and the vibrant American way of life. It is not only our safest highway network, but also the most flexible as it serves changing traffic, increasing freight needs, and evolving American goals. Since President Eisenhower, every President and each succeeding Congress has supported the Interstate System, including preservation of the taxpayers' investment in its construction.

Looking to the Future

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Interstate System, we must think about the future. We must examine the remaining service life of Interstate highways and how to preserve and improve the system. As demand on the transportation system continues to increase, we must continue to find ways to protect and enhance the environment and be good stewards of the environment, while speeding up decisions and completion of vital transportation projects. The Federal-Aid Highway Program has been financed in the same way for 50 years. We need to broaden our thinking and move forward to address today's challenges. Instead of thinking of roads and bridges as liabilities, State and local governments need to think of infrastructure as an asset.

In many respects, our transportation system has become the victim of its own success. Our growing economy and standard of living have created a demand for travel and movement of goods that is increasingly difficult to meet. Congestion and delays have become a fact of life on our highways and in our airports and seaports. However, congestion is not an insurmountable problem. We must embrace new solutions in order to make meaningful progress in reducing congestion.

During National Transportation Week, Secretary Mineta launched the *National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network* -- a national congestion relief initiative designed to address the challenges ahead for our surface transportation system. This dynamic plan will maximize valuable tools Congress provided in SAFETEA-LU to improve operation of our surface transportation system, encourage the development and deployment of new technologies and construction methods, and expand opportunities for private investment in transportation infrastructure.

One of the most critical aspects of the *National Strategy* is reducing or removing barriers to private-sector investment in the construction and operation of transportation infrastructure. The Department will encourage more States to pursue private-sector investment opportunities. Major financial institutions and their clients are expressing increasing willingness to invest billions of dollars in roads. Furthermore, public-private partnerships (PPPs) can include incentives for system management and congestion relief, can make owners more accountable to users, and can lower the long-term costs of infrastructure maintenance and reconstruction. PPPs maximize the strengths of both the public and private sectors. It is time to take advantage of the private sector's flexibility,

innovation, creativity, expertise, and access to capital, while maintaining public oversight, accountability to taxpayers and long-term strategic planning.

The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which is meeting today, is reviewing current methods and exploring alternatives for investing in and managing our surface transportation systems. The Commission is tasked with finding solutions that not only support the sustainability of financing surface transportation, but also reduce the costs of congestion.

We also must continue to keep highway safety as the top priority. Secretary Mineta has declared highway traffic deaths a "national tragedy." It is unacceptable that over 43,000 people died on American roadways last year. SAFETEA-LU provided a comprehensive set of new and expanded tools for the U.S. DOT to use in working with States and other partners to improve highway safety through better safety data and analysis of crashes, development of strategic highway safety plans, and increased financial resources and flexibility to States to address their safety problems. Continuing this emphasis on a data-driven, comprehensive approach to safety will be critical to successes in the future.

Ours is unquestionably the most physically complex highway system in the world. Operational improvements will play a vital role in the future management of the system. The application of advanced technology or Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is critical to address these operational issues. One example is the establishment of a national 3-digit telephone number for traveler information, 5-1-1, which gives callers information about local road and traffic conditions by dialing an easy-to-remember number, and our current efforts to promote the deployment of 5-1-1 services. As a result of these efforts, we expect 5-1-1 service to be available to half the nation by the end of this year. Services like 5-1-1 give motorists the information they need to make better choices about the routes they take, helping them save time by avoiding traffic tie-ups.

We must improve the efficiency of our transportation system by improving materials, contracting, and construction techniques. SAFETEA-LU includes $75 million for the Highways for LIFE pilot program. The purpose of the program is to promote state-of-the-art technologies, elevated performance standards, and new business practices in the highway construction process. We believe that the Highways for LIFE pilot program will help to build highways faster, make them last longer, and make them safer.

Research also will play a vital role in improving and maintaining the Interstate System. Although SAFETEA-LU increases funding for Surface Transportation Research, Development, and Deployment, certain structural problems within research funding challenge the Department's ability to carry out the program Congress envisioned in Title V of SAFETEA-LU. Because all of the Title V funding for FY 2006 through 2009 is designated in statute for specific programs and projects, there is no flexible Title V research funding remaining for certain activities that are authorized by Congress, and that are important for a national program. The result is that across-the-board reductions are required each fiscal year in order to stay within authorized contract authority, and

many research activities underway in FY 2005 will be slowed or stopped. I would welcome an opportunity to answer your questions about the structural issues and program impacts, including risk to achieving our vision for the future.

Conclusion

The Interstate System has been the backbone of our economy for 50 years. It provides a vital connection between people, goods, and services and helps link U.S. markets with those around the world. The consistent network of roads, bridges and tunnels became a vehicle for freedom and helped our nation become the most mobile in history.

This year, we honor President Eisenhower's vision of a network of highways that brought America together and strengthened the national economy, but we also set the stage for the system's next 50 years. Our vision for the future focuses on reducing congestion and improving the system's capacity. With new building techniques, new financing methods, advanced system operations that include freight logistics, and new programs that improve construction and repair projects, we will continue President Eisenhower's legacy and keep America's highway system strong, safe, and efficient for the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify at this hearing commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Interstate System. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward in shaping the next 50 years of our Nation's highway transportation system in support of the Nation's economic growth and our quality of life.

OPENING STATEMENT
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT AND PIPELINES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Celebrating 50 years: The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System

Tuesday, June 27, 2006, 2:00 p.m.
2167 Rayburn House Office Building

Chairman Duncan and Ranking Member Johnson, thank you for hosting this subcommittee hearing today. I am pleased to welcome our witnesses Mr. Capka, Dr. Gifford, Dr. Lewis, and Mr. McCormick.

This year the National System of Interstate Highways celebrates 50 years of success. In my own state of Missouri, we are undertaking our first ever design-build project which will be the biggest road construction project in Missouri's history.

The interstate highway system provides much needed mobility across the nation and was one of the most ambitious public projects at the time it was implemented. Today, we need to harness the memory of Eisenhower's ambition to guarantee the interstate highway's future through system renovation, better funding, and innovative projects. I hope that this hearing today reminds us how significant the National System of Interstate Highways is to our nation and the importance of ensuring its continued success.

Thank you all for your attendance here today and I look forward to your testimony.

###

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines

"50th Anniversary of the Interstate System"

June 27, 2006
2:00 p.m.
2167 Rayburn House Office Building

Opening Statement of Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for calling today's hearing to enable us both to commemorate the remarkable achievement in our nation's history that construction of the Interstate system constituted and to take stock of the new directions in which our transportation policy should now move to carry our nation forward.

The Interstate system fundamentally reshaped not only our transportation network, but also our nation's commerce and even our communities. For example, the thousands of

alignment choices made during the construction of the Interstate determined the fates of hundreds of small towns and supported the massive expansion of residential neighborhoods far away from inner-city cores.

The Federal Highway Administration reports that today the Interstate system comprises nearly 47,000 miles, including almost 57,000 bridges. Remarkably, according to the Transportation Research Board, these 47,000 miles constitute less than 1% of our nation's road mileage – but carry approximately 20% of our nation's road traffic.

It is also remarkable that while the federal government covered 90% of the cost of constructing the Interstate system, these investments have accounted for only between 20% and 25% of total annual highway expenditures made

by state and local governments between the 1960s and the present.

These numbers highlight two points: the critical role that state and local governments play in developing roadway infrastructure and the essential role that the federal government has played in developing a truly national transportation network to link the states.

At both the state and federal levels, highways and even transit systems have been financed in large measure by user fees, including predominantly a tax on the sale of gasoline. Unfortunately, this system of financing is not keeping pace with our nation's transportation maintenance and construction needs – straining both the states' ability to build infrastructure and the federal government's ability to

guide the development of a network that ensures the mobility of our nation as a whole.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, 30% of all state expenditures on roadways made in 1981 were made on new construction. By 2001, expenditures on new construction had fallen to just 13% of total expenditures.

Total lane miles in our nation increased by approximately 5% during that period while total vehicle miles traveled increased by more than 80%. The result of these colliding trends is clearly evidenced by the increasing congestion we are experiencing throughout our nation.

We were told by the U.S. Department of Transportation when we began work on SAFETEA-LU that we needed to

provide $375 billion just to help states maintain our existing highway system and begin to build the backlog of needed facilities.

In the end, Congress met the Administration's demand that only $286 billion in federal funding be provided through 2009 – and it is now increasingly unclear whether our current funding stream will enable us to keep even this more modest commitment.

As we recognize the accomplishment that construction of the Interstate system represents, we must acknowledge what made that system possible: the implementation by the states of a program backed by federal funding to serve our national interests.

I know I join my colleagues on this Committee when I remind the President and the Congress that our national interests again require the federal government to step forward and lead the innovative development of our national transportation network to strengthen connections among existing modes and support our continued economic growth.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses and yield back.

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines
Hearing "Celebrating 50 Years: The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System"
June 27, 2006

On June 29, 1956, President Eisenhower signed into law the Federal-Aid Highway Act establishing a 41,000 mile National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, and the Highway Revenue Act, which created a Highway Trust Fund. This important legislation paved the way for the creation of the current Interstate highway system.

Today, the Interstate Highway System is comprised of over 46,000 miles and is the backbone of our overall highway system. The Interstate Highway System connects large cities and small towns, providing easy transportation of people and goods throughout the nation. Plus, it facilitates national defense and emergency preparedness.

Although the Interstate Highway System only makes up 1.1 percent of the nation's total public road mileage, it carries 24 percent of all highway travel, including 40 percent of all travel by single-unit and combination trucks. An astounding 721.4 billion vehicle-miles are estimated to travel on Interstate highways annually, including 91.3 billion vehicle-miles by heavy single-unit and combination trucks.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Federal-Aid Highway Act. As we celebrate, however, we must not forget how essential it is for us to continue investing in our Interstate Highway System and our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Congress was forward thinking by providing states with funding to construct a national system of highways. As we remember the legacy of this important legislation, we need to ensure we are developing the policy and funding mechanisms to ensure it can continue to meet our nation's transportation needs in the coming years.

Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines
Hearing on
Celebrating 50 Years: The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System
June 27, 2006, 2:00 p.m.
2167 Rayburn House Office Building

Testimony of
Jonathan L. Gifford, Professor[1]
George Mason University
School of Public Policy
Arlington, Virginia

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to speak about the fiftieth anniversary of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System.

The planning, design, construction and ongoing renewal of the Interstate System are together an extraordinary accomplishment in the history of our nation. The system is the envy of the world, and is being emulated today across the world from China to India to the expanded European Union.

Others today are concentrating on how the system came into being. I would like to focus on the benefits the Interstate has bestowed, and on the lessons it has taught us.

First, the safety impacts of the system are perhaps its most important legacy. As shown in the attached chart, the system in its early years exhibited a fatality rate just less than 3 per 100 million vehicle miles, roughly half the rate on non-Interstate roadways at the time. Over time, that rate declined to under 1 death per 100 million vehicle miles.

Moreover, the Interstate demonstrated the benefits of its distinctive design features, such as medians between opposing traffic lanes, grade-separated interchanges, and high design speeds. That demonstration effect led to the wider adoption of such features on non-Interstate roads, leading to lives saved off the system as well. Together, these on- and off-system effects have saved tens of thousands of lives in the last half century.

The second legacy is the effect on American lifestyle. The Interstate's development occurred during a time when the nation was engaged in a massive shift of housing, retail and employment to the suburbs. Demand for suburbanization arose from many sources besides the Interstate. The GI Bill, VA housing loans, mortgage interest deductibility – all of these contributed to America's suburbanization. But the Interstate was a powerful force shaping how, how fast and how much suburbanization occurred.

Today, the majority of Americans reside in suburbs, and the Interstate system is an integral part of everyday life. Almost every American household and business has a range of choices of where to work, live, play, shop, study and worship that would not be possible without the Interstate system.

---

[1] Address: 3401 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA; telephone 703-993-2275; email jgifford@gmu.edu; fax 801-749-9198.

The third legacy is our freight and distribution system. The Interstate has facilitated a fundamental transformation of this system. Truck utilization has soared at a rate of increase of almost 12 percent per year since 1956.[2] Today, virtually every item in our workplaces and households has reached us via the Interstate system.

This shift to truck-based distribution allows the American economy to have the world's most efficient supply chain management system. This efficiency arises in part from faster and cheaper transportation. But faster transportation also allows shippers to spend less on warehouses, and less on inventory in those warehouses. And products are less likely to spoil or become obsolete or go out of fashion while in a warehouse or in transit. Overall, our "total logistics costs," as this bundle of services is called, have declined from 16 percent of GNP in 1980 to 10 in 2001 at the same time that freight volumes have exploded.[3]

The Interstate has also taught us some important lessons.

First, the Interstate system has taught us that large-scale social and technological systems are complex and unpredictable. Many of the consequences of the Interstate system – positive and negative – were not anticipated. In 1937, the Bureau of Public Roads predicted that trucks would never carry a significant amount of freight because they would be inexorably squeezed between rail for bulk commodities and air for high value freight. Mayors clamored for urban interstates to help revitalize their downtowns. Transit owners believed their primary concern was being exempted from motor vehicle taxes. Reality turned out to be dramatically different.

Moving forward we must be humble about our ability to predict consequences, and support careful monitoring and measurement of the impact of our programs in order to continue to benefit our economy.

The second lesson we learned from 50 years of Interstate building is how much we value community preservation, social justice and environmental stewardship. In the early years, the Interstate had serious adverse impacts on many older cities and especially on poor and disadvantaged communities. Our urban renewal policy of using Interstate highway investments to remove "blighted" areas displaced tens of thousands of poor African American citizens. We also sought to build Interstates through parks and environmentally sensitive open spaces.

Congress soon intervened and passed landmark environmental legislation such as the Clean Water Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970, and the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969. These laws continue to guide highway and non-highway development today.

Finally and most importantly, the Interstate shows that the development of a carefully engineered and planned system can bring extraordinary benefits. This achievement arose from strong federal leadership for planning and financing that is almost unprecedented in our 230-year history. The nation has spent $420 billion dollars on the construction of the

---

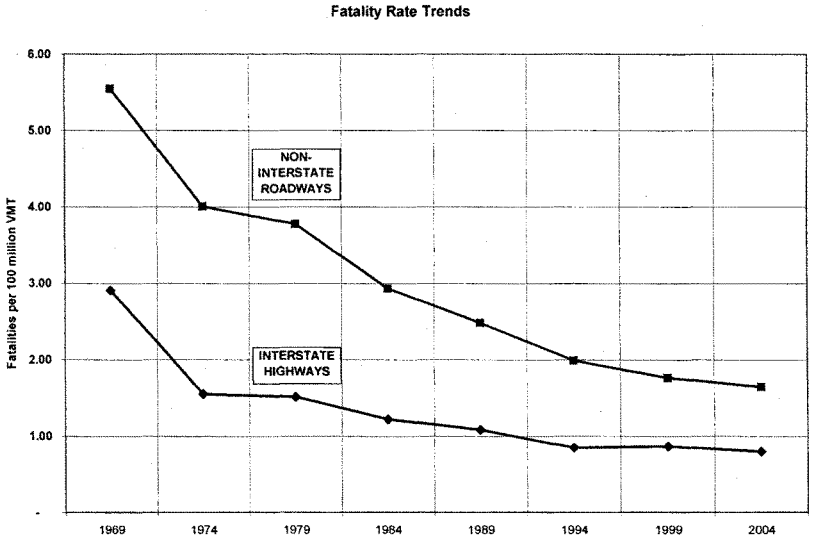
[2] U.S. Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: Annual Issues).

[3] U.S. Federal Highway Administration, *FHWA Freight BCA Study: Summary of Phase II Findings* (2004), available at http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/bca_study_phase2/.

Interstate, $370 billion from federal sources.[4] System development has adhered generally to the 42,000-mile network that was defined between 1944 and 1956. For almost 4 decades between 1956 and 1990, Congress was satisfied to focus on building the interstate, and special projects were a rarity. No other system in our history – with the possible exception of the air traffic control system – has commanded such long lasting federal leadership and support.

These legacies and these lessons make a strong case for strong and continued attention to the stewardship and renewal of the Interstate system we have built, as well as careful consideration of options for expanding and adapting it to the challenges and realities of the 21st century.

Thank you, and I welcome any questions you might have.



sSource: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, based on U.S. Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Statistics* (various years); and data from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS).

[4] Author's calculation, based on United States Government Accountability Office, "Highway Infrastructure: Interstate Physical Conditions Have Improved, but Congestion and Other Pressures Continue," (Washington, DC: 2002); and U.S. Department of Transportation, *1991 Interstate Cost Estimate : Report from the Secretary of Transportation Transmitting a Report of Factors for Use in Apportioning Funds for the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways* (Washington, DC: 1991).

Testimony to

The Highways, Transit and Pipelines Subcommittee

of the

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Hearing on

Celebrating 50 Years of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System

by

Tom Lewis

Professor of English, Skidmore College

and author of

Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life

June 27, 2006
2:00 p.m., 2167 Rayburn House Office Building

At 11:15 on Monday morning July 7, 1919, a three-mile caravan of Army motorcycles, cars and trucks, 260 enlisted men, 35 officers, and the 15 piece band provided by the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, set out from Lafayette Square in Washington for Union Square in San Francisco, 3000 miles away. As they traveled westward through cities like Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Canton, Ohio; South Bend, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, people came out in force to greet them. In the Rockies of Wyoming and Utah and across Nevada, they went where few automobiles had gone before. At Carson City, Nevada they bivouacked on the statehouse lawn. And when the convoy reached California, the governor met it at the state line, and rode on in triumph with the men to San Francisco.

It took 62 days for the soldiers to cross the country; they averaged but five miles an hour. Some days they went as few as three miles. Breakdowns and accidents were frequent; in the Sierras a truck rolled into a steep ravine.

One twenty-eight year old Army major on the trip described it as a journey "through darkest America with truck and tank." The condition of the roads ranged "from average to non-existent." America, the officer said in his report to superiors, must have better roads. Thirty-seven years later, on June 29, 1956, that Army officer, Dwight David Eisenhower, now President of the United States, signed into law the legislation creating the Interstate Highway System. That signature changed the landscape of America and helped to bring about the extraordinary economic engine that has enabled this nation to remain the preeminent economic power in the world.

The statistics of this construction feat are staggering. Imagine if you will the state of Connecticut knee-deep in earth; we moved that much to build the Interstates. Imagine enough concrete to lay six wide sidewalks to the moon; engineers poured that much for the Interstates. Think of the state of Delaware; we acquired that much land to construct the 46,000 miles of Interstates. Imagine so many massive drainage culverts that they would serve six cities, each the size of Chicago; we placed that many beneath the ribbons of concrete and asphalt of the Interstates. Without question the Interstate Highway System is the greatest and the longest engineered structure ever built.

But such statistics are the least interesting part of this story of the roads that transformed the face of America and the way we Americans live and act. The highways have served as a vast stage on which we have played out a great drama of contradictions that accounts for so much of the history of our nation. On this stage we see all our fantasies and fears, our social ideals and racial divisions, our middle class aspirations and our underclass realities.

It took more than forty years--not thirteen as specified by the legislation President Eisenhower signed into law--to build the Interstate Highway System. In that period the

Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite and humans walked on the moon; the federal government extended civil rights to all Americans and a civil rights leader who held the Nobel Prize for peace was slain; one president was assassinated and another resigned in disgrace; two new states, Alaska and Hawaii, entered the Union; the population of the nation rose from 165 to 290 million; scientists virtually eliminated polio, while a new disease, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, began; and the number of professional baseball teams increased from 16 to 26, most playing in new ballparks accessible only by automobile.

Some of the new roads did mean an end to the past: Route 30, the old Lincoln Highway, the road built by Carl Graham Fisher, the visionary who knew that good roads meant good business, would merge in many places with Interstate 80; Interstate 70 would take over much of old Route 40, the National Road that Thomas Jefferson had planned; while old Route 66, the road from Chicago to Los Angeles, made famous by John Steinbeck in The Grapes of Wrath, and more recently by a popular song, would now be succeeded by a new road, Interstate 40. The new Interstates would make hundreds of small towns into ghostly derelicts.

The story of the Interstates have deep roots in our desire for freedom and movement, and our knowledge that we are at liberty to resolve our destiny in our vast landscape. Sometimes exploring and migrating, always roaming and circulating, we have shaped our lives by moving across and about three time zones, twenty-five degrees of latitude and forty-five degrees of longitude. Always prizing freedom of movement, we have realized it by taking new jobs in distant places, moving to new houses and apartments, and driving hundreds of million of miles each year in automobiles. Moving, always moving onward.

For centuries we Americans have relentlessly celebrated our mobility. Our nineteenth-century heroes sang of the open road or piloted a fugitive raft down the Mississippi; while our twentieth-century antiheroes celebrate being "On the road" or acting out a Bonnie and Clyde outlaw fantasy across the broad landscape. "Tonight the night's bustin open, these two lanes will take us anywhere."

America's forbears from Europe and other continents came to invent and reinvent themselves in unfamiliar spaces. Eight decades after they formed a union, they took pain to manumit those whom they had brought in chains and, in limited ways, granted the newly emancipated the freedom to go forth and invent themselves also.

Across the landscape of our continent, we Americans have left the imprint of our movement: paths, roads, turnpikes and canals in the eighteenth century; railroad tracks in the nineteenth; and an ever increasing number of wide roads and streamlined highways in

the twentieth. These signatures of civilization spell out America's notions of progress and above all speed.

The conventional wisdom that the automobile changed America in the twentieth century is true only because of the extraordinary road system that the nation developed. The idea of automobiles without roads is rather like the idea of computers without software.

Today, fifty years after President Eisenhower signed the legislation creating the Interstate Highway System, we can see how these roads have changed our landscape and our lives. If you go west across the nation on Interstate 40 from Wilmington, North Carolina, you will pass through the tobacco country of Greensboro and Winston Salem; the Great Smoky Mountains; the city of Nashville, home to country music; Memphis, the city of W. C. Handy and Elvis; fireworks shacks in Arkansas; oil derricks in Oklahoma, the remnants of old Route 66; the parched dusty towns of the Texas Panhandle; the Continental Divide in New Mexico; the banded purple, scarlet, and pink tints of the Painted Desert in Arizona; and the desolate blur of California before reaching the end of the Interstate at Barstow. Along the way you will see ghostly signs to places like Clinch River, Crab Orchard, and Bon Aqua; Palestine, Beulah, and Lonoke; Canute, Clinton, and Elk City. And you will pass thirty-six KOA campgrounds and thirty-seven Holiday Inns; about a hundred Wal-Marts; forty-six Burger Kings, and eighty-two McDonalds--that's a Big Mac for every thirty-one miles of Interstate.

Think of where our economy would be today if there were no Interstate Highway System. There are approximately 16,000 exits on the more than 40,000 miles of Interstate. With the Interstate Highway, the federal government created thousands of economic opportunities for development at each of those exits. Those exits have functioned in the same way that stops on the railroad did in the nineteenth century, but with one difference: the railroads offered but a few hundred stops or economic opportunities.

Along with global positioning and computers the Interstates form a vital link in "Just in Time" shipment of goods. Just in Time has meant an end to plant inventories of old. American manufacturers and retail sales giants like Wal-Mart and Target have turned these highways into a vast rolling and fluid warehouse that has helped to make their operations more efficient, and cut their costs.

Although some deplore what the Interstate Highway System has done to the nation, few would desire, or could ever imagine, an America without it. When the Century Freeway--one of the last significant sections of the Interstate Highway System--opened in Los Angeles in October 1993, the Governor of California spoke to a very different group than President Eisenhower might have imagined. Those who came to

celebrate--native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians among them--heard the governor tell them it was their freeway to use and enjoy. An African American minister prayed for the structure that "links us and binds us together." As always, our highways hold the promise of connection.

In building the Interstate Highway System, we revealed on that great stage all our glory, and sometimes our meaness; all our vision, and sometimes our shortsightedness. We revealed all of our democracy's virtues and sometimes its failings. As the American poet Walt Whitman said more than a century ago:

> O public road...
> You express me better than I can express myself.

So let us celebrate all that Dwight David Eisenhower achieved with his signature on June 29, 1956. Though I doubt he realized how momentous that occasion was, the president approved a bill that ranks with Social Security, the GI Bill of Rights, and Civil Rights ;egislation as the most important in the twentieth century.

President Eisenhower's signature brought us to this moment in our history. It is your difficult task as our representatives to take us into the future, to create legislation that preserves and enhances the achievements of the past. It is not an easy moment, but there are steps to take that demand responsible leadership. The nation faces the unprecedented challenge of a dependence on oil provided by foreign countries that often look upon us with hatred and malice. Increasingly we find ourselves at their mercy. We must slip from their grip.

I would ask you to consider an alternative: the gradual establishment over three and a half years of a federal levy of $3.50 on each gallon of gasoline. Think of it not as a tax but a freedom fee, the sacrifice each of us must make to maintain our liberty and our way of life that depends so much on our efficient mobility. Half of the money collected from the freedom fee should go to maintaining the Interstate Highway System and other federal roads, as well as intermodal transportation links which promise to become increasingly important for our economy. The other half of the money should fund meaningful research with the goal of developing efficient automobiles and alternate forms of energy.

Why is it a freedom fee? And why is it so important? Our highways give us the freedom to go wherever we wish and whenever we want. All Americans value their mobility. They complain about increases in gas prices, but they endure them. At the same time they increasingly understand that they are paying high prices to unfriendly nations. Wouldn't we rather pay that money to ourselves so that we can maintain our mobility and our freedom? If such a proposition were put before the American people responsibly with the understanding that freedom is not free but demands the sacrifice of all of us, the majority

of American citizens will respond responsibly.

Thank you and your staff for the opportunity to participate in this celebration of the Interstate Highway System and I welcome any questions you may have.

"Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System"

Testimony of
American Road and Transportation Builders Association

Before the

Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Presented by

Eugene R. McCormick
Senior Vice President & Chairman of the Board
Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas
and
Chairman, American Road and Transportation Builders Association

June 27, 2006

Good afternoon.

I am Eugene McCormick, senior vice president & chairman of the board of Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas, a planning, engineering and construction management firm. I am also the 2006 chairman of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

ARTBA is very pleased to be part of this Committee's observation of the 50th anniversary of the landmark legislation that created the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

ARTBA is a trade association with more than 5,000 member firms, government agencies and private individuals involved with planning, designing and constructing the nation's transportation systems.

On June 29, 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the law authorizing construction of the Interstate Highway System and creating the Highway Trust Fund to finance it. It was the greatest domestic achievement of his presidency. It also represented the fulfillment of the 1901 vision of ARTBA founder Horatio Earle who advocated a federally-built "Capital Connecting Government Highway System," which he said, "would connect every state capital with each other and the Nation's Capital—Washington, D.C."

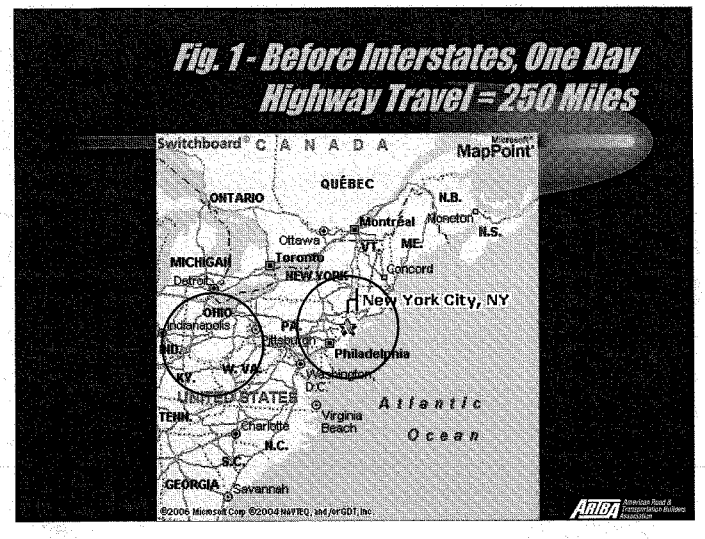
Many of our members helped design and build the Interstate Highways, from the first ground-breaking in the mid-1950s through the completion of the planned system during the 1980s, and today our members are busy reconstructing and improving the Interstate Highways and adding new segments.

Contribution of the Interstate Highways to U.S. Economic Growth and Prosperity

Our members are proud of their contribution and they should be. The Interstate Highway System not only made travel in the United States quicker and safer, it had a profound impact on the American economy and was a primary factor in the strong postwar economic growth that has made the U.S. one of the most prosperous countries in the world.

Prior to the Interstate Highways, most travel in the United States took place on two-lane roads. A full day's travel was about 250 to 300 miles, which means the market area for a firm would be pretty limited. Figure 1 illustrates the area that could be served within one day by a firm in the New York City area and one located in southern Ohio. There is no overlap.

As a result, much of the manufacturing output in the U.S. was high-cost small-scale production for local markets.



The Interstate Highway System completely changed this. On the Interstate Highways, a truck could travel 500 to 600 miles in a day, and the one-day market area for a firm quadrupled as illustrated in Figure 2.

This had two impacts on the U.S. economy.

First, it gave producers an opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale and adopt technologies for large-scale output.

Second, it allowed producers to relocate to areas where labor and material costs were lower.

The result was a surge in productivity growth and real incomes of American workers and families.

This is just part of the impact that the Interstate Highway System has had on our national economy and quality of life. It is clearly one of the government's most important accomplishments and demonstrates the continuing value of investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Conditions and Performance on the Interstate Highways

Today, the Interstate Highways are the core of our nation's surface transportation system.

The Interstates comprise just over one percent of the road miles in the U.S., but carry almost 25 percent of all traffic and more than 40 percent of all truck traffic.

And the traffic continues to grow. In the last decade alone, from 1993 to 2004, the amount of travel on the Interstate Highways grew more than 36 percent while traffic on other roads grew 29 percent. During that decade, truck traffic on the Interstates grew more than 48 percent, and more than 63 percent on urban Interstates.

In that same time, the number of Interstate lane miles has grown only 4 percent.

Looking ahead, the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida predicts that total traffic in the U.S. will grow another 60 percent by 2025, while the Federal Highway Administration foresees a doubling of truck traffic during that same period.

All of this is putting a great strain on our Interstate Highways.

According to the latest report of the Texas Transportation Institute, 59 percent of major roads in urban areas are congested during peak travel periods each day compared to 34 percent in 1982. The amount of peak-period travel on major urban roads under congested conditions has grown from 32 percent to 67 percent. As the volume of travel grows, these figures will keep getting worse and spread to more and more parts of the country.

This kind of travel volume takes a toll on the physical condition of the Interstate Highways. In urban areas, less than half of the Interstate miles are in what the Federal High-

way Administration considers "good condition," according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2004 Report to Congress on the *Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance*. Most of the remaining urban Interstate Highway miles are considered in "acceptable condition," although eight percent do not even meet that minimum standard.

In rural areas, the Interstates are in somewhat better shape, with 72 percent of miles in good condition and almost all of the rest in acceptable condition.

Investment Requirements for the Interstate Highways

The long-term outlook for the Interstate Highways, however, is troubling.

According to the U.S. DOT's report, an average annual investment of $18.8 billion in 2002 dollars from all levels of government would be necessary between 2003 and 2022 just to maintain current physical and performance conditions on the Interstate Highways. And this figure does not take into account the rising cost of highway construction materials and labor. When cost increases are added, the annual investment needed just to maintain current conditions on the nation's Interstate Highways goes up each year. The annual investments in current dollars to maintain conditions on the Interstates are shown through 2015 in Figure 3.

Fig. 3 - Annual Investment Required to Maintain Conditions on the Interstate Highways

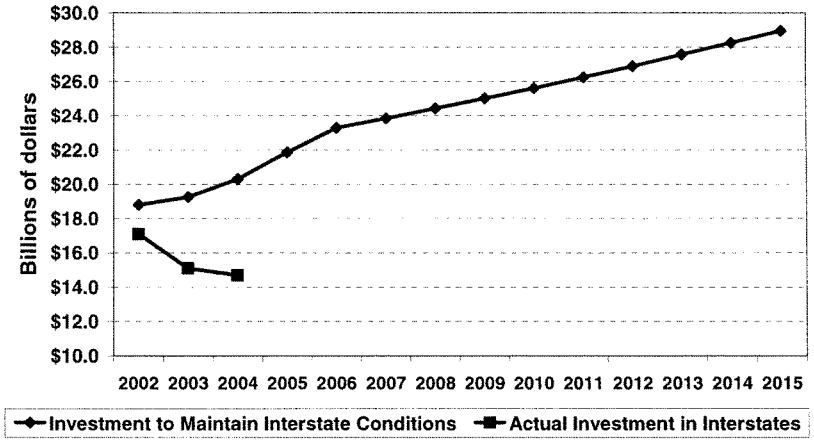


Figure 3 also shows that all levels of government invested only $15.1 billion on improvements to the Interstate Highways in 2003 and $14.7 billion in 2004, according to the

Federal Highway Administration. While we can't predict how much will be invested in the Interstate Highways in future years, Figure 3 shows that the amount to maintain conditions will grow from $20 billion in 2004 to $29 billion by 2015.

Apparently, the current level of investment is sufficient to maintain physical and performance conditions on Interstate Highways in rural areas or even improve them a bit, according to the U.S DOT report.

But for urban Interstates, the current level of investment will not maintain conditions. At the existing level of investment, the percent of urban Interstate miles with a riding surface judged "acceptable" would decline from over 90 percent today to 81 percent within 20 years, according to the U.S. DOT report, while the number of hours of delay would rise by 10 percent.

Although state and local governments invest some of their own highway funds in the Interstates, most of the funding needed to close the gap shown in Figure 3 would probably have to come from the federal highway program. This growing challenge should be a major issue for SAFETEA-LU reauthorization.

There are some who contend that the completion of the Interstate Highway System means the federal role in highway investment should shrink and that future transportation investment should focus on alternative transportation modes.

As I have testified, the demands on the Interstate Highway System are growing and these highways are becoming less and less capable of meeting the nation's need for a safe, efficient transportation system. The economic impact of failing to meet the demands that our society imposes on the Interstate Highways would be profound. This must remain an integral focus of the federal transportation policy agenda.

Conclusion

The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System is one of the best investments this nation ever made.

The improvements in transportation made possible by the Interstates were a critical element in the postwar growth and prosperity of the American economy.

But capacity on the Interstate Highways has not kept pace with demand. In many urban areas, the Interstate Highways are clogged with traffic for much of each day and are impeding, not facilitating, the economy.

According to the U.S. DOT's 2004 Conditions and Performance Report, the annual investment required just to maintain conditions on the Interstate Highways will grow from $18.8 billion in 2002 to $29 billion by 2015. Actual investment in recent years has fallen substantially short of the amount needed to maintain conditions.

This Committee's interest in the Interstate Highway System and today's hearing is a hopeful sign that the needs of our Interstate Highways will be met.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways this week, this milestone achievement provides an opportunity to launch the much-needed national examination of how the challenges facing the Interstates and other transportation facilities should be addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee today. I am happy to answer any questions Members of the Committee might have.

Statement by Congresswoman
Juanita Millender-McDonald
On
"Celebrating 50 Years: The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System"
Tuesday, June 27, 2006
2167 Rayburn HOB
2 PM

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member DeFazio for scheduling this very important hearing.

I am pleased that we are gathered to celebrate 50 years of the Interstate Highway System and what it has done for our economy and for our communities. I would like to salute the Late President Dwight Eisenhower for his vision in creating this important Interstate Highway System.

Freight Mobility or goods movement has been an important issue for me and for California's 37th District for some time now. In Southern California, we have planes, trains and trucks and they all converge in my district.

Specifically, my district contains the Alameda Corridor, the quintessential goods movement rail project, and the I-710 a corridor of national significance that has some of the worst truck traffic in the country.

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach also feed into my district. In fact, eighty percent of the goods that come into this country from the Pacific Rim enter through these southern California ports and consequentially move through my district.

I therefore founded the Goods Movement Caucus at the beginning of the 108th Congress to examine these freight issues. One of the initiatives that I engaged in was the drafting of the Goods Movement Projects of National and Regional Significance. This became the Projects of National and Regional Significance which was included in SAFETEA-LU. My intent was to create a program that focused on Goods Movement Projects and how we enhance our freight infrastructure.

Clearly, an efficient and well-maintained Interstate plays a critical role in goods movement. I join my colleagues in looking forward to improving the interstate highway system, particularly the corridor of national significance, such as the I-710.

I wish to welcome Mr. Richard Capka, Dr. Jonathon Gifford, Dr. Tom Lewis, and Dr. Bill Buechner. Thank you for being with us today. I am anxious to hear from today's witnesses about the future outlook of the Interstate Highway System and its continued impact on goods movement.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

○