

March 8th, 2012

Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. John Olver

"Thank you Mr. Chairman.

"Mr. Secretary, it is a pleasure to speak with you today. The Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year 2013 budget request reflects the ambitious vision needed to ensure America's competitiveness in the global economy through job creating investments in our nation's transportation infrastructure.

"Overall, your budget request provides the structural outlines for a robust six year, \$476 billion surface transportation proposal. It reflects a growing consensus among nonpartisan academics that an increased public investment in our transportation system is needed to maintain an efficient foundation for our economy. As you are well aware, DOT's most recent Conditions and Performance Report quantified the annual investment gap to maintain our current system of highways and bridges in a state of good repair at \$27 billion and an annual gap of \$96 billion to expand the system to meet the needs of a population that grows 10% each decade. The state of transit isn't much better, where the estimated state of good repair backlog is nearly \$78 billion.

"Unfortunately, the House reauthorization proposal does not meet the challenge. I am particularly concerned with the House Leadership's inability to simply bring a bill to the floor. The uncertainty of short term extensions or worse, a lapse, is disrupting state's planning activities and putting the upcoming construction season in jeopardy. Not only does this allow our infrastructure deficit to increase, but it comes at a time when the unemployment rate within the construction sector stands at 18%.

"Specifically within the Fiscal Year 2013 proposal, I am pleased that the Administration continues its leadership in advocating for a 21st century passenger rail network. The \$2.5 billion request for rail programs and your commitment to the TIGER grant program reflects an understanding that all users of all modes benefit from an interconnected network that increases

transportation options. And that an all of the above strategy is needed to meet the transportation needs of a population that is expected to grow by 100 million people by 2050.

"In addition, I am pleased to see that the 2013 budget remains committed to the development of a NextGen air traffic control system. This multi-year, multi-billion dollar initiative is clearly a complex management undertaking, but I believe is vital to efficiently utilizing our airspace, reducing congestion, improving safety, and minimizing aviation's environmental footprint.

"Finally, the Department must remain vigilant when it comes to the agency's core safety mission. From day one, you have embraced this responsibility for all modes and specifically have made raising awareness of the dangers of distracted driving a personal crusade. More recently, you budget introduces a Pipeline Safety Reform initiative that proposes hiring 120 new inspectors to provide oversight of interstate and intrastate facilities.

"Mr. Secretary, in concluding, I believe the budget request you have submitted is robust and presents a strong vision for how we tackle our evolving transportation challenges.

"Mr. Chairman, I yield back."

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