Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx Secretary U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E. Washington, D.C. 20590 The Honorable Jeh Johnson Secretary U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretaries Foxx and Johnson:

The Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa and the resulting transmission of the disease into the United States and elsewhere raise legitimate concerns about our nation's preparedness to contain and eliminate dangerous pandemics. Our national and international transportation networks are vital to the function of our economy and the American way of life. Among other things, they give individuals the freedom to travel and facilitate the free flow of goods and services. However, as events in Texas have tragically shown, these same networks can also serve as conduits for dangerous pathogens such as the Ebola virus.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains that the risk of an Ebola outbreak in the United States is remote, we are concerned that even a relatively limited number of cases within the United States could result in harmful disruptions to our economy and society. As such, we believe it is important that we thoroughly and dispassionately assess the Federal Government's readiness to prevent or mitigate the harms associated with pandemics.

We write to you because your Departments and the agencies thereunder have already been engaged in the whole-of-government effort to ensure adequate screening of travelers from Ebola-affected nations and reduce the likelihood of any further cross-border transmission of the disease. In the event that more cases emerge in the United States, particularly cases in which exposure to the virus occurred abroad, your interagency cooperation will only grow in importance.

As such, we seek to better understand how your Departments are collaborating to protect the public from risks associated with infectious diseases. In particular, we seek the following:

- 1. A full accounting of your Departments' efforts to date to prevent the further introduction of the Ebola virus into the United States from West African "hot spots" and any other regions from which the virus might enter the United States.
- 2. A description of your Departments' efforts to coordinate Ebola screening processes at key international transit points between the United States and West Africa with counterpart agencies in other nations.

- 3. A description of contingency plans your respective Departments have developed to prevent transmission of the Ebola virus or other infectious pathogens within the United States.
- 4. A description of your efforts with transportation companies and their employees to detect and prevent the spread of infectious diseases including the Ebola virus.
- 5. A description of contingency plans developed to combat infectious diseases more easily transmissible than Ebola virus, such as airborne pathogens.

As time is of the essence with this rapidly evolving situation, we request a response to this inquiry as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

JOHN THUNE

Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Commerce,

Science, and Transportation

BILL SHUSTER

Chairman

House Committee on Transportation

and Infrastructure