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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Rep. Rashida Tlaib Written Testimony
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Member Day

Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you for the opportunity to share written testimony regarding my priorities within the Committee's jurisdiction for the 119th Congress.

Lead Service Line Replacement and Support for Water Infrastructure

There is no safe level of lead exposure. Millions of Americans are still drinking water with significant lead levels, and our children are particularly vulnerable. Our state and local governments do not have the resources and capacity to address this lead crisis without significant federal support.

Our work to rapidly replace every lead service line in America is reaching a critical moment. Updated estimates put the total cost of full lead service line replacement near \$75 billion, and while we have made some progress, at least \$60 billion more is urgently needed to finish the job. But instead of surging funding, Congressional appropriators actually just *cut* \$125 million in lead service line replacement funding in the Interior appropriations package. This is an insult to every one of our communities struggling for access to clean water.

In 2025, 65 Members signed onto a letter led by the Get The Lead Out Caucus supporting funding for lead service line removal, more than doubling the previous years' support. There is broad, bipartisan support throughout Congress for getting the lead out of our drinking water systems, and the time to act is now.

Moreover, the benefits of removing lead pipes and reducing lead levels in tap water significantly exceed the costs. These benefits include protecting about a million infants from low birthweight-related complications, preventing thousands of children from suffering from ADHD, and avoiding 1,500 fatal heart attacks. Reducing lead levels in tap water also will reduce the damage to Americans' kidneys and immune, reproductive, and nervous systems.

Lastly, the fight to eliminate lead in drinking water is directly related to the worsening condition of our water infrastructure. The EPA's water funding programs are set to expire this September. Without continuing to fully fund and invest in our federal water infrastructure programs, we cannot win the fight against poisonous drinking water.

I urge the Committee to make lead service line replacement one of its highest priorities for 2026 and reauthorize and fund federal water infrastructure programs at levels exceeding IIJA funding.

Water Affordability

The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) created in 2021 was a lifeline for families that kept water flowing during the worst of the pandemic, but its funding has run out and families facing increasingly unaffordable water bills have few places to turn for help.

We have a federal assistance program for gas and electricity, but no permanent program for water. Our families can't live without access to water. Millions of our neighbors across the country have their water shut off simply because they cannot afford their rising bills. Safe, accessible, and affordable drinking water is essential to public health, and many water utilities cannot afford to maintain their infrastructure.

The federal government must rapidly increase water assistance to households and public water utilities so that every low-income household has the safe, reliable water they need to live and thrive. Thousands of my Michigan families depend on water assistance, and thousands more are still waiting for help, as available support falls well short of the need. I will soon reintroduce my Half Century Update for Water Access and Affordability Act ([H.R. 10150](#) in 118th Congress) to create a permanent low-income water assistance program.

I look forward to working with the Committee to advance water affordability assistance legislation in 2026 and beyond.

PHMSA Hazardous Materials Enforcement

In the aftermath of the East Palestine, Ohio rail disaster, there is rightfully more focus than ever on the transportation of hazardous materials through our communities.

In Detroit, the 94-year-old Ambassador Bridge spans the Detroit River and connects the U.S. to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Over 20% of trade travels over the crossing, which is located upstream of municipal drinking water intakes. The bridge is privately owned by the Detroit International Bridge Company, which has a long history of illegal activity and disregard for safety rules and regulations. The long-time owner was even jailed and held in contempt for not following court orders.

In 2024, after years of lobbying, including ghost-written letters of support from lawmakers who accepted campaign donations, the State of Michigan made the regrettable decision to loosen restrictions on hazmat transportation across the Bridge over community objections in both Detroit and Windsor, Ontario. The bridge is too old, too narrow, and lacks proper firefighting and other hazard mitigations. Furthermore, with the impending opening of the new, state-of-the-art Gordie Howe International Bridge, the Ambassador Bridge is now functionally obsolete.

The federal agencies in charge of enforcing hazardous materials regulations – which include Customs and Border Patrol and PHMSA – lack the resources for aggressive enforcement that safeguards public health. I encourage the Committee to support the highest possible funding for PHMSA’s Hazardous Materials Field Operations so that it can provide proper and timely compliance inspections on the Ambassador Bridge and others like it.

Line 5 and PHMSA Pipeline Field Operations

Michigan is home to numerous oil and natural gas pipelines and has already suffered one of the worst inland oil spills in our nation’s history when the Canadian oil company Enbridge’s Line 6B dumped a million gallons of heavy crude oil into the Kalamazoo River. As Enbridge continues to operate its Line 5 pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac in the Great Lakes, despite fierce political and legal opposition from State and Tribal officials, the importance of pipeline inspections and enforcement cannot be overstated. I urge the Committee to support the highest possible level of funding for PHMSA’s Pipeline Field Operations to help safeguard the Great Lakes for generations to come. Moreover, I urge the Committee to reject any support for the Line 5 pipeline or the Line 5 tunnel project.

FAA Noise Mitigation

Michigan’s 12th District is home to many communities within close proximity to the Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW), and many of our residents are burdened by the air and noise pollution that comes with living under flight paths. I encourage the Committee to support the highest possible level of funding for the Federal Aviation Administration’s Airport Noise Compatibility Planning, referred to as Part 150. Robust funding for Part 150 will allow DTW and airports like it across the country to update their noise mitigation plans more frequently to adjust to changing weather patterns, airline trends, and in DTW’s case, the Cleveland/Detroit

Metroplex Project. This in turn will better protect our residents from pollution and disruptions to their everyday lives and will help local governments respond to resident concerns.

Pedestrian Safety

I also encourage the Committee to continue support for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program, which funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries. Our district has suffered far too many roadway and pedestrian casualties, and our local governments need more support designing better roadways and pedestrian infrastructure to keep us all safe.

Federal Highway Buffers

Many of my residents live within a few hundred feet of major federal highways and experience elevated rates of significant health problems due to increased air pollution exposure. Sound walls, cut sections, and roadside vegetation can all help reduce exposure to air pollutants that harm our communities. I urge the Committee to support funding for green buffers and other means of reducing residents' exposure to transportation-related air pollutants, especially in environmental justice communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these important priorities for the 12th district and all of Michigan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rashida Tlaib".

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress