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Statement for the Record
The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Member Day
January 14, 2026

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today at this Member Day hearing so that I can discuss some very important matters that I hope the Committee will prioritize for this Congress.

The Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing program is a fiscally responsible federal credit tool that supports housing affordability for American families and commercial investment for American jobs.

Structured entirely as repayable loans—not grants—Transit-Oriented Development projects financed through the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing program offers a smart way to expand housing and stimulate local economies.

Currently, federal law restricts Transit-Oriented Development loans to projects within a half mile radius of intercity rail stations.

This traditional standard largely benefits older Northeast cities and excludes many U.S. communities – particularly in the South and Midwest - where most U.S. cities intentionally built their historic freight rail hubs modestly further from their downtowns.

That is why I have introduced the CHARGE Investments Act, which is bipartisan legislation that brings much-needed modernization to the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program by addressing outdated limitations that have largely excluded fast-growing cities, largely in the South and especially in Georgia.

By extending eligibility for Transit-Oriented Development projects to central business districts within a two-mile radius of intercity rail stations – so long as they are served by dependable transit – this legislation acknowledges the unique urban design of Southern cities, where central business districts are often located at a distance from historical rail hubs.

This policy change has important implications for housing development. Commercial development located near transit is uniquely positioned to serve visitors, business travelers, and residents alike.

They help maximize the value of Transit-Oriented Development projects by creating vibrant, accessible, and walkable neighborhoods that encourage both tourism and commerce. Yet, in many cases, access to financing for such projects has been a limiting factor.

The CHARGE Investments Act preserves the fiscally responsible foundation of the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program by maintaining loan-based financing and requiring at least 25% private or non-federal investment, while expanding access to cities unintentionally left out due to outdated eligibility limitations.

Transit-Oriented Development projects create jobs, revitalize underused urban areas, and drive long-term economic growth without expanding the federal deficit.

In many cases, the federal government gets back four to five times its investment, thanks to growth in construction, housing, hospitality, and retail.

This bipartisan legislation represents exactly the kind of practical, fiscally sound policy that delivers real results for American communities.

By modernizing the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program, the CHARGE Investments Act will stimulate economic activity in rural towns and growing cities alike, ensuring some regions are not given preference over others.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue for my district, state, and the country. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to pass the CHARGE Investments Act, which will bring significant benefits to our communities.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress