

House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Members' Day Hearing
April 18, 2023
Testimony of Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici

Good morning. Thank you Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for the opportunity to address the Committee.

I have long advocated for long-term and practical solutions to our nation's crumbling infrastructure and to the climate crisis. Our recent efforts to improve transportation and infrastructure have been significant to this work. Long-term investments in transportation and infrastructure boost the economy, generate jobs, and promote commerce by protecting disadvantaged populations, lowering carbon emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and reconstructing systems sustainably and resiliently. New infrastructure programs should invest in projects that reduce pollution and use natural infrastructure solutions.

It is commonly and correctly assumed that surface transportation infrastructure must be repaired, maintained, and built. Yet in the Northwest, we know that a complete infrastructure plan must include more than just roads and bridges. We need more accessible multi-modal public transportation, strong broadband internet, affordable housing, improved water systems, port repairs, and updated public schools, and we need to decarbonize the transportation sector. Innovative transportation projects in the district I represent in NW Oregon, like the Beaverton Loop and Merlo Bus Garage Zero Emission Retrofit, will help more people get to work, school, and other destinations in the community more quickly and reliably while reducing emissions by decreasing the number of vehicles on our roads. I'm also advancing projects recognizing the need to enhance our resiliency before a Cascadia Subduction Zone event, which is overdue in the Northwest.

Furthermore, the variety of climate effects around the country can cause travel and cargo delays as well as temporary or even permanent closures of highways, bridges, tunnels, ports, and airports. Exposure to flooding, wildfires, and extremely high temperatures reduces the lifespan of infrastructure and raises maintenance costs, jeopardizes worker safety, and obstructs vital access to evacuation routes. We must continue to make sustainable and resilient roads, highways, and runways a top priority.

Some of the most challenging decarbonization issues are presented by off-road transportation, such as aviation and maritime. As we approach legislation for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) reauthorization, I would like to highlight recommendations that are priorities of mine:

- Continue Federal research on solutions for aviation, including electrification and decarbonization;
- Continue RDD&D for low-carbon alternative fuels, including next generation feedstocks, biofuels, and bioderived chemicals; low-carbon building and infrastructure

and materials; and solutions for medium- and heavy-duty, and off-road transportation, including rail, aviation, and maritime;

- Continue to provide tax incentives and grant support for low-emission aviation technology and sustainable aviation fuels that reduce carbon pollution;
- Continue to expand the Federal Aviation Administration's grant programs for cleaning up airport ground support equipment;
- Provide additional credit for SAF and clarify that low-carbon shipping fuels are eligible under the Renewable Fuel Standard or a future Federal Low Carbon Fuel Standard; and
- Continue to provide grants to expedite port electrification, reduce emissions from port operations, and upgrade ports for offshore wind development.

When the House last considered FAA reauthorization, one of my priorities was to give people a voice and a remedy when they have a dispute with airline companies. My amendment to create the Aviation Consumer Advocate was signed into law in our last bipartisan reauthorization. This Advocate is dedicated to helping travelers navigate the Aviation Consumer Protection Division and to work to resolve problems that arise with airlines. As the Committee begins considering reauthorization, I urge you to further enhance consumer protections for the millions of Americans who fly every day. I am eager to work with you to determine how the Aviation Consumer Advocate position can be strengthened to secure travel with dignity for everyone.

Additionally, in last year's Water Resources Development Act, I submitted a handful of priorities that were incorporated in the final bill, including a request that the United States Army Corps of Engineers provide Congress a report detailing the challenges associated with dredging the Lower Willamette River, particularly the area of the channel that falls within the Portland Harbor Superfund site. I request that the Committee provide thorough and timely oversight on the implementation of these actions.

Further, I am grateful for the passage of the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provided \$550 billion in new spending to invest in our nation's roads, bridges, water infrastructure, transmission system, broadband, and more. I appreciate the Committee's oversight on the implementation of this funding and, specifically, the billions of dollars in funding for port infrastructure upgrades, the Army Corps' massive backlog of authorized projects, and waterways that will create two million good-paying jobs per year over the course of the decade.

As a Senior Member of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and having spent four years on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, I recognize that the challenges to meet the many needs facing this country are great. As this Committee advances legislation to improve our Nation's transportation systems and infrastructure, I stand ready to support you and your efforts to do so in a sustainable and resilient manner for the betterment of our communities and the health of the planet.

Thank you.