

House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Member Day Hearing
May 14, 2025

Testimony by Congressman Maxwell Alejandro Frost (FL-10)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for the opportunity to address the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

My Central Florida is one of the nation's fastest growing regions. Like similar communities, our streets and highways are notoriously congested. Government, community, and business leaders there all agree that we must attack this problem through better transit.

Good public transportation saves everyone money, whether they use it or not. With better transit access, drivers save thousands of dollars a year. Transit means less congestion, less gas burnt off while idling in traffic, and less wear and tear on cars. Transit also saves everyone time after work and between errands as well: time that can be dedicated to friends and family, not stuck in traffic.

When it comes to making transportation work for their residents, communities large and small face a major obstacle in the shockingly high price tag of transit buses. These can easily cost over a million dollars each.

Industry stakeholders are aware of several contributing factors, like the amount of customization, the decline in the number of manufacturers, supply chain issues, and the low number of yearly orders. To develop consensus around legislative solutions to this problem, further work needs to be done to confirm the key drivers and how the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the federal government can help bring down prices.

I will be introducing the *Transit Bus Affordability Act*, which has been developed with input from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), industry stakeholders, and policy experts. The legislation instructs the GAO to investigate which factors are driving up the cost of transit buses, what steps the FTA, transit agencies and stakeholders have taken to reduce costs, and any additional authorities that the FTA or transit agencies may need to help minimize costs.

This bill would not be a burden on the budget and its findings could save our state and local governments millions of dollars as they pursue better and updated public transportation. As the committee works on constructing a surface transportation reauthorization bill, I encourage you to incorporate this legislative study so we can take steps toward saving taxpayer money and helping our communities travel more easily and affordably.

Additionally, I hope the committee will consider and pass my bipartisan *Safe Air on Airplanes Act*, which would build on actions this committee took in last year's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization to tackle fume events on commercial airplanes. This issue was brought to my attention by a constituent who suffered major health issues from fume events while working as a flight attendant.

The *Safe Air on Airplanes Act* will ensure a future where pilots, cabin crew, and airline passengers will not have to fear fume events by ending the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in new commercial aircraft design, requiring filters on bleed air systems to effectively keep oil particulates out of flight deck

and cabin air within seven years, and phasing out the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in existing commercial aircraft designs in the coming decades.

A fume event occurs when pilots, crew, or passengers inhale engine oil or hydraulic fluid present in the air that is supplied to the flight deck and cabin. These particles include a long list of toxic chemicals, and the adverse health effects can include dizziness and vomiting, difficulty breathing, irregular heart rate, and memory loss. Fume events have ended the careers of exposed pilots and flight attendants. An average of five fume events are reported to the FAA each day.

The root cause of fume events is a part of commercial airplane designs called a bleed air system. Except for the Boeing 787, all aircraft take (or “bleed”) air through the engine compressors and supply it to the cabin and flight deck. The compressors are lubricated with oil and can also ingest external contaminants like hydraulic fluid. New advances in aircraft design and technologies mean that we no longer need these systems.

Another piece of bipartisan legislation I ask the committee to consider is the *Energy Storage for Resilient Homes Act*. This bill allows existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) resources to be used for the installation of home energy storage in single family homes. When severe weather hits, loss of electricity can mean loss of life, especially for seniors and people with disabilities. Home energy storage can keep that vital electricity running. While current disaster mitigation policy is focused on the city and state level, this bill will allow individuals and households to directly protect their homes and themselves.

Disaster mitigation is just one of FEMA’s many important roles. I ask this committee to resist supporting any proposals to abolish it. Central Floridians are currently gearing up for another Hurricane Season, where tens of thousands of our community members may once again need this help. FEMA has thousands of experts in disaster response and recovery, rebuilding infrastructure, and grants management and maintains stockpiles of emergency supplies and equipment ready to be deployed. If FEMA is abolished, states will compete for scarce resources and qualified, experienced personnel. Americans deserve better than “good luck with that” when it comes to surviving severe weather.

Finally, I request that the committee revises the inappropriately unequal funding split for the Highway Trust Fund, which is presently 80 percent for highways and 20 percent for transit. Well-funded public transportation makes everyone’s commute easier. Less traffic means that we will all be breathing cleaner air on those trips while there will also be less pollutants in our soil and water.

I look forward to working with the committee to improve transportation for our constituents, whether they are looking forward to the fastest commute home to their family or the safest flight possible on their epic trip to Central Florida’s internationally celebrated attractions.