

Testimony of Congressman Darrell Issa
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
119th Congress Member Day
May 14, 2025

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this Member Day hearing to hear from rank-and-file Members across the Congress regarding our priorities.

I would like to raise two issues for the Committee's consideration today – both of importance to my District and with nationwide implications.

First, is a concern of judicial efficiency in San Diego. As the Committee knows, in 2009 this Committee authorized the construction of the Carter-Keep Courthouse Annex in San Diego. This is a federal courthouse that includes courtrooms and chambers of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

At the time of Congressional authorization, Congress presciently foresaw and planned for the future growth of the courts in the original construction. Consequently, the building which was constructed provides significant extra capacity with the result that the court has shared the modern, secure building with other federal tenants.

Since then, the court's space requirements have grown, as anticipated, and so they have requested Congressional permission to build out chambers and courtrooms within the existing Courthouse space.

Completion of this project will improve the safety and security of the court as well as improve efficiency by consolidating the court's operations into a unified space designed for its use.

Importantly, I would note, only Committee approval is needed for the required renovation to proceed. And, no additional appropriations are required by Congress.

As the Chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Courts, Intellectual Property, the Internet, and Artificial Intelligence, I can confidently assert that this renovation is an appropriate and timely step toward efficient, safe, and planned-for operations of the court.

Given these considerations, and that the renovation in question has been needed and contemplated for several years beginning in the fall of 2022, I would respectfully request that the Committee authorize the San Diego renovation project and remove future renovation restrictions swiftly.

I would like to now turn to another matter of significant need for my District, one with great national import.

As the nation increasingly adopts electronic and hybrid vehicles, gas tax revenue will continue to decline. Consequently, policy makers have begun examining changes to the funding of road and bridge construction.

One idea that is unfortunately gaining purchase is the concept of a per-mile tax, or milage tax, under which drivers' trips are tracked, reported, and taxed per mile. While policymakers may be interested in this option as a theoretical matter, as a practical matter, implementation of this sort of milage tax requires drivers to have a government-approved tracker in their vehicles. Such a proposal would allow the government to monitor the movements of every driver wherever they go, record and database such movements, and tax their every move.

California often pilots bad ideas first, and the track-and-tax scheme was no exception. A few years ago, the local joint powers authority that covers much of my district, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), attempted to pioneer such a scheme. Now, Caltrans, the state authority, is reviewing implementation options.

Needless to say, the San Diego track and tax plan was wildly unpopular in my District and opposition was immediate and widespread. In fact, a constituent survey of the district I represent found that more than 90 percent of all residents opposed this type of "track and tax" proposal — the most decisive response we have ever received.

Thankfully, we defeated the initial plan, and today SANDAG has shared there are no current plans to revisit. However, Sacramento is now weighing statewide options instead. And, federal pilot projects show many communities are testing similar plans.

I have repeatedly introduced the No Track, No Tax legislation to prevent such a government overreach.

As this Committee considers the future funding of America's transit ways, I believe that this misguided experiment is instructive that track-and-tax schemes have no place in a nation that prizes the freedom to drive whenever and wherever one pleases without the government monitoring one's every move.

I hope these considerations are helpful to the Committee as it continues its work in the 119th Congress. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.