

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

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**Rep. Rashida Tlaib Written Testimony**

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day 2023

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Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
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Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and 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 as the Committee works to reauthorize various transportation programs vital to our communities.

**PHMSA Field Operations and 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.

In Detroit, the 94-year-old Ambassador Bridge spans the Detroit River and connects the U.S. to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. About 20% of our nation's trade with Canada crosses this bridge every year. 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 longtime owner of that company was even jailed and held in contempt for not following court orders. In recent years the company has unsuccessfully sought permission from the State of Michigan to transport new classes of hazardous materials across the Bridge. It is important to note that the Bridge is located upstream of municipal drinking water intakes. The bridge is too old, too narrow, and lacks proper firefighting and other hazard mitigations.

Recently, claims have been made that prohibited hazardous materials are nonetheless traveling across the Bridge without proper authorization. For instance, the Detroit Windsor Truck Ferry, which is permitted to transport those restricted hazmat classes, transported only 3,838 restricted hazmat loads last year when in prior years it routinely transported more than 10,000. My residents deserve to know where hazmat is traveling and how. I have already requested PHMSA investigate this situation.

However, 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 provide 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.

Moreover, 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 Enbridge's Line 6B dumped a million gallons of heavy crude oil into the Kalamazoo River. As Enbridge continues to violate State law by operating its Line 5 pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac in the Great Lakes, the importance of pipeline inspections and enforcement cannot be overstated. I urge the Committee to provide the highest possible level of funding for PHMSA's Pipeline Field Operations.

### **FAA Noise Mitigation**

Michigan's 12<sup>th</sup> 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 provide the highest possible level of funding for the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Noise Compatibility Planning, or 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.

### **WRDA Flooding Prevention and Environmental Justice**

As I shared with this Committee last year, Southeast Michigan has been inundated by historic flooding in recent years. As these catastrophic weather events increase in ferocity and frequency, our communities need the tools to be prepared. This year's WRDA presents an opportunity for my neighbors to better understand the threats that we face due to climate change, and to be equipped with resilient, modern water infrastructure. First, I encourage the Committee to offer support to the Detroit Division of the Army Corps of Engineers in planning and identifying flood resilience for communities along Ecorse Creek. I also encourage the Army Corps to conduct a feasibility study for flood risk management in Southeast Michigan. Third, I encourage the Committee to broaden environmental assistance for Michigan by committing \$35 million dollars for projects like wastewater treatment, water supply, environmental restoration, and surface water resource protection.

Finally, I encourage the Committee to truly incorporate environment justice into this year's WRDA bill. We should increase capacity and expertise within Army Corps and give the public more meaningful opportunities to weigh in on the projects that affect their communities. We should continue increasing opportunities for assistance by expanding the Pilot Program for Economically Disadvantaged Communities. Finally, we must maximize toxic remediation in ecological restoration, navigation and flood resilience projects; we must support minority-owned businesses; and we must continue developing and advancing environmental justice innovation.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my priorities with the Committee and ask that you consider funding these important programs as you develop reauthorizations this year.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress  
Michigan's 12<sup>th</sup> District