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COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND INSURANCE
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Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. As a former member of this Committee from last Congress, I can attest to the importance this Committee to fixing our nation's failing infrastructure, while making investments that will push the transportation sector forward into the 21st century.

As the member who represents the Fifth Congressional District of Georgia, including the City of Atlanta, I have seen firsthand how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has delivered for my constituents, and I look forward to seeing the Inflation Reduction Act fully implemented so our nation can truly build back better.

Again, thank you for all the work that was done last Congress. As you all consider legislative priorities for this Congress, I would like to highlight some of the priorities that deeply impact my constituents in Georgia's Fifth Congressional District:

Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization

My district is home to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the world's busiest and most efficient airport. While I take pride in that recognition, many of my constituents, including myself, that live near the airport are subject to substantial noise and air pollution.

Aerospace and aviation are responsible for as much as nine percent of carbon emissions from United States transportation. Such emissions often negatively impact disadvantaged communities near our nation's airports. While initial investments in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) have been made this year, thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, more must be done to help the aviation sector transition to a low emission future. It is imperative that we focus on robust investments in the production and distribution of cleaner fuels if we hope to decarbonize the industry.

I also ask the Committee to consider funding and to continue to invest in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions and Noise (CLEEN) Program, which is FAA's principal environmental effort to accelerate the development of new aircraft and engine technologies. These are crucial in developing technologies that will reduce noise, emissions, and fuel burn and enable the industry to expedite integration of these technologies.

Negating Neighborhood Noise Act

Airplane noise is not the only source of noise pollution in my district. Too many of my constituents are frustrated with traffic noise near congested interstates. Many of my constituents and their neighbors bought their homes years before the construction of nearby interstate highways and simply want to live and raise their families in quiet neighborhoods. Last Congress, I introduced a bill along with Representative Himes of Connecticut and Representative Bacon of Nebraska titled the Negating Neighborhood Noise Act, which would allow funds from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program to be used to build noise barriers in residential areas built before the interstates that are now impacting them. I plan to reintroduce this legislation soon. Given that similar language passed in the House as part of the Moving Forward Act in the 116th Congress and was also originally in the INVEST in America Act last Congress, I hope this Committee gives this issue fair consideration.

Care is an Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Act

I also plan to reintroduce the Care is an Economic Development Strategy -or CEDS- Act this Congress, which was a bill I was proud to have led with the late and great, Don Young.

Childcare, early childhood education, disability and long-term care, and elder care are essential to communities' economic development. When children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities can get the affordable, quality care they need, their family members can return to work, provide for their families, and invigorate our economy, while knowing their loved ones are in good hands. Currently, Economic Development Districts must consider transportation access, workforce development, technology use, and environmental protection when creating their comprehensive economic development strategies. However, there is no mention of considering quality and affordable care-based services. The CEDS Act will task Economic Development Districts with showing how they will increase access to services like childcare, early childhood education, disability and long-term care, and elder care. In the 116th Congress this bill passed out of Committee and through the House, and I hope this Committee fully considers this legislation when reintroduced or when in discussions of an Economic Development Administration reauthorization.

Water Infrastructure Sustainability and Efficiency (WISE) Act

Many of my constituents have also raised their concerns with wastewater and stormwater pollution. That's why at the beginning of the last Congress I introduced the Water Infrastructure Sustainability and Efficiency -or WISE- Act.

Created in 2009 through bipartisan leadership, the Green Project Reserve has required Clean Water State Revolving Fund programs to use a certain portion of their funds for green infrastructure projects, including water or energy efficiency improvements or other environmentally innovative activities. However, the exact percentage of this set aside has varied year to year, creating uncertainty for water or energy efficiency improvements. We have an obligation to our constituents to rethink our infrastructure and setting the Green Project Reserve set aside at 20 percent of the annual Clean Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grant

would be a great start. We need to ensure states have consistency when they are planning water or energy efficiency improvements.

In closing, thank you Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for the opportunity to testify before you today. I additionally want to thank you for the many opportunities you have provided members to engage in the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization process. I am hopeful this committee continues to build off of the momentum from the passage of the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and our productive discussions from last Congress. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours For the People,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nikema Williams", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress