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OPENING STATEMENT

CHAIRMAN BILL SHUSTER

Contact: [Justin Harclerode](#), [Jeff Urbanchuk](#) or [Keith Hall](#) at (202) 225-9446

CHAIRMAN BILL SHUSTER (R-PA)

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HEARING ON “BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AMERICA”

FEBRUARY 1, 2017

OPENING STATEMENT

(REMARKS AS PREPARED)

Good morning and welcome to the first full Committee hearing of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the 115th Congress. I want to welcome our new Members of the Committee, and our returning Members. I look forward to working with all of you during what will be a busy Congress for our Committee.

This morning’s hearing is about looking to the future and how we build a 21st century infrastructure for America. But before we begin, I think it is important for us to remember the successes this Committee had in the last Congress.

Our Committee, working in bipartisan fashion, was incredibly productive over the last two years. We were able to move large, complex legislation to improve America’s infrastructure. The FAST Act, the WIIN Act, our PRRRA passenger rail and Amtrak reforms, the PIPES Act, the Coast Guard Authorization Act, and other Committee bills are now law because we were able to build consensus and get things done for the American people.

Our track record speaks to the hard work of our Members and staff. For our new Committee Members here today – take note. Our goal is the same level of success for this Congress, so get ready to roll up your sleeves.

America’s infrastructure is the backbone of our economy. As a people, we are bound together by our values and our dedication to liberty. But physically, we are bound together by our transportation network.

From the beginning of the very First Congress that authorized the first Federal lighthouses, to the Transcontinental Railroad, to the Panama Canal, to the Interstate Highway System, to the Nation’s airports, the federal government has played a vital, Constitutional role in ensuring the American people and our

economy are connected through infrastructure.

A strong infrastructure means a strong America – an America that competes globally, supports local and regional economic development, and creates jobs.

However, our infrastructure will face significant challenges in the future.

Forecasts predict that our population will grow from 319 million in 2014, to 400 million by 2051. The movement of freight is expected to increase by 40 percent over the next 30 years. By the end of the next decade, air travel demand is expected to increase from 750 million passengers annually to one billion. And transportation technology continues to evolve – driverless cars, commercial drones, and commercial space transportation are just a few examples of this change, but more changes are coming.

Our infrastructure policies have to keep pace with changing technologies. We must be able to meet our infrastructure needs of today, but also be poised to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

One thing November's election taught us was that the American people are ready for their elected officials to rethink the way we do things here in Washington and challenge the status quo.

This election also raised the profile of infrastructure in the minds of the American people and policymakers. In fact, I believe this was the first time a president ever mentioned the word "infrastructure" in an inaugural address.

This feeling of optimism is echoed by over 400 associations who wrote in support of investing in infrastructure and fixing the Highway Trust Fund. Their thoughts are contained a letter I would like to enter into the record today.

What does this mean for us? It means that we now have a unique opportunity. The wind is at our backs, and it's time to act on our infrastructure needs.

President Trump made a promise to the American people that he would reassert America's greatness. From my perspective, that means ensuring that America is competitive in the crowded global marketplace of today and tomorrow. It means reimagining and building a 21st century infrastructure—leveraging resources from all levels of government and the private sector.

Modern infrastructure lets our people, goods, products, and crops get where they need to go more efficiently and at less cost.

It's improved roads and bridges that reduce bottlenecks and problems that slow the flow of commerce. Modern infrastructure is an aviation system with truly modern, efficient, and transformational air traffic control technology. It's ports and waterways that let our farmers and manufacturers move their crops and products to remain competitive with other nations. It's rail systems that focus on more effective, efficient service in regions of the country where rail transportation works well. It's pipelines that can transport the energy products that will power us into the future. It's infrastructure that is resilient when natural disaster strikes. It's infrastructure that can be built faster, unburdened by bureaucracy and impediments to private investment. And it's infrastructure that encourages innovation and unleashes the next revolution in mobility.

Modern infrastructure means jobs, because when transportation efficiency improves the bottom line for

our job creators, they can put more people to work.

That is my vision for a 21st century infrastructure, and it can be achieved if we work together to build it.

I welcome our panel of experts and look forward to hearing from you. Your organizations have a unique understanding of our infrastructure needs. Your companies and your workers depend on the functionality of our transportation networks, so your perspectives are critical in helping us shape the future of America's infrastructure.

Click [here](#) for additional information from today's hearing, including testimony, video, and background information.

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