



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

---

## Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing:

*Bumper to Bumper: The Need for a National Surface Transportation Research  
Agenda*

July 11, 2019

Thank you Chairwoman Stevens and Ranking Member Baird for holding this hearing, and thank you to the witnesses for your participation. In addition to being chairwoman of this Committee, I am also a senior Member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. While there is great expertise about transportation issues on my other committee, the Science Committee is where we truly understand the importance of research to developing smart solutions to our nation's challenges. As we all know, our outdated transportation infrastructure is high on our list of challenges.

My hometown of Dallas is a hub for air travel and freight. We have five interstate highways, we have the DART light rail, we are trying to build a high-speed rail line to Houston, and of course in Texas we love our cars. Dallas is even going to serve as a test site for the Uber Elevate project to develop flying cars. So we know a few things about inland modes of transportation. However, we have our share of transportation challenges. Dallas is the fifth-most-congested city in the nation, in large part because we are one of the most rapidly growing cities in the nation. As we continue to look for ways to increase safety and alleviate congestion in the near term, we must also set a course for smart transportation systems of the future. That will require investments in research and technology.

I have long been a champion for the research and development programs at the Department of Transportation. These programs require strong partnerships with local and state governments to help identify the needs. They also involve strong partnerships with the private sector. However, we need a good balance between long-term research that looks over the horizon, and nearer-term research to address more immediate needs. We also need a transparent system in which the best ideas rise to the top for funding. Currently, the Department of Transportation has a 5-year strategic plan for research, development, and technology. The plan covers a lot of important topics in great detail. What it seems to lack is a coherent vision for the future of connected transportation systems. I am concerned that, absent such a vision, we are not sufficiently

investing in the long-term research that will make our transportation systems more efficient, safer, environmentally friendly, and resilient.

I look forward to hearing from today's expert panel of witnesses as we consider ideas for reauthorization of the research, development and technology programs at the Department of Transportation.

Thank you and I yield back.