

Opening Statement
Ranking Member David Wu
Technology & Innovation Subcommittee Hearing
Transportation Research Priorities: Maximizing Return on Investment of Taxpayer Dollars
June 14, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Quayle, for calling this hearing. I also want to thank our witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee and for their assistance today in helping us assess what research and development needs should be addressed in any surface transportation reauthorization bill considered by Congress.

Since the last reauthorization, this Subcommittee has examined a number of research and development challenges faced by the Department of Transportation.

For example, in 2009, we looked at ways to:

- improve the planning and coordination of DOT's research agenda;
- strengthen technology transfer and ensure that federally funded research and development is meeting state and local transportation needs;
- and mitigate the impact of the surface transportation system on the environment.

It's important that we have some of these discussions again today, because the transportation sector has an enormous impact on our lives and the economy. In fact, the average household spends 16 percent of its budget on transportation. In all, transportation-related goods and services contribute about \$1.2 trillion to the U.S. economy.

If we are committed to making our transportation system more reliable and more efficient, and ensuring that transportation planners are wisely investing taxpayer dollars, we need to have a robust and effective transportation research program. Therefore, I am pleased that this subcommittee continues to take seriously its critical role in guiding DOT's research and development priorities, while seeking input on the specific investments needed to see those priorities through to fruition.

I also believe that we need to be talking more seriously about improving the energy efficiency of our entire transportation system. We should be asking questions like:
What modeling tools would help communities develop an effective mixed-use transportation system of cars, buses, bikes, light rail, and trolleys like we have in Portland, Oregon?
If we are serious about congestion mitigation and traffic management, what are the next steps toward realizing those goals and reducing the amount of time cars spend idling in traffic?

Sustainability and energy efficiency are no longer just buzzwords in the transportation community. They are crucial components of a working national transportation infrastructure. Building more roads is not the only answer. We must use our resources carefully and plan strategically—and that requires a commitment to finding simple and innovative ways to increase the productivity and longevity of our transportation systems.

I'm proud that the 1st District of Oregon has been at the forefront of this endeavor, implementing and operating a transportation infrastructure that serves national model of integrated energy efficiency and sustainability.

The state and local departments of transportation in Oregon have worked effectively to implement truly innovative solutions to our transportation challenges using a diverse set of technologies including:

- a transit signal priority project that greatly reduces idling for buses by linking on-board computers to traffic lights;
- sensory ramp meters that cut congestion on our freeways;
- and real-time digital dissemination of traffic information to travelers so they can avoid backups.

These efforts are coordinated regionally, not just city by city, so that the energy savings benefit taxpayers throughout the area.

Ms. Lynn Peterson, who is the Sustainable Communities and Transportation Policy Advisor to the Governor of the State of Oregon, is here to tell us more about how the research and policy communities collaborate to make these projects a reality.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will play an important role in defining our transportation research priorities for the future. I'm confident that today's witnesses will give us some solid ideas for moving transportation research forward and I look forward to their testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.