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

March 12, 2019

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Honorable Nancy D. Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

Dating back to the early days of our great nation, infrastructure has always been the lynchpin of our country's economic success, linking the flow of commerce through our oceans, inland waterways, roads, bridges, and airways. A safe and efficient infrastructure system is vital to the ongoing economic security of the United States.

Once the envy of the world, America's infrastructure is now crumbling. In Congress, we are facing a critical point where we must commit to fix our broken airports, roads, bridges, and ports, or watch them fade into deeper disrepair and see our nation's prospects fade as a result. I believe we must act now on infrastructure legislation to restore America's position among the transportation leaders of the world.

These infrastructure issues are no different in Virginia and my district. Northern Virginia is home to the worst traffic "hot spot" in the nation, a strained public transit system including the struggling Metro and other passenger rail, and an ever-growing population of air travelers at Reagan National (DCA) and Dulles International (IAD) Airports. Additionally, the Port of Virginia—perhaps one of the most economically vital ports in the U.S.—faces the need to widen and deepen its channel as it welcomes the largest container ships to call on the east coast.

To address our infrastructure needs, funding sources will play an important role. Chief among them is finding a long-term funding solution for the Highway Trust Fund. Established in the 1950's, the fund uses revenues generated from the gas tax at the pump. With the growing use of fuel-efficient vehicles, visits to the pump are becoming less frequent. I believe it is important that Congress consider and discuss other potential options when paying for our surface transportation system. Many states have already implemented a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) fee and that should certainly be a part of the conversation.

However, more can and should be done to address our federal processes as it pertains to infrastructure projects. Recently, Congress has made great strides in cutting the red tape that prevents shovel ready projects from getting underway. Yet, government regulations still create unnecessary, costly delays that stifle investments. We must continue to find ways to make our federal processes more efficient.

We must also continue to expand and create opportunities to encourage public-private partnerships, implement and incorporate innovative technologies that capture the potential of modern infrastructure capabilities, and find ways to fully maximize federal investments.

Additionally, rural populations still lag behind when it comes to quality high speed broadband access. In Virginia, almost half of rural residents lack access to sufficient internet speeds, while more than 29 percent lack access to any internet service at all. High speed broadband provides people access to modern applications such as telemedicine, online education and distance learning, and other 21st century tools that allow them to succeed in the world today. It is essential that broadband investments and policies that promote broadband expansion be a part of any infrastructure discussion.

As consensus grows for the need to address our nation's infrastructure system, I stand ready to work alongside my colleagues in Congress to ensure our nation's infrastructure is the envy of the world once again. I urge you to work alongside Republicans to ensure Americans have the innovative and efficient transportation system they deserve.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

cc:

Representative Nita Lowey, Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations

Representative Kay Granger, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations

Representative Frank Pallone, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce

Representative Greg Walden, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce

Representative Peter DeFazio, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Representative Sam Graves, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure