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Examining Economic, Environmental, and Societal Impacts of Freight Transportation: December 5th U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructures Hearing

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The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit and Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials of the United States House of Representatives ("Subcommittee") held a hearing on December 5th titled:

Where's My Stuff?: Examining the Economic, Environmental, and Societal Impacts of Freight Transportation ("Hearing")

The *Hearing* witnesses included and their prepared testimony addressed:

- Ms. Erin Aleman, Executive Director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Efficient freight movement requires multiple modes working together seamlessly and reliably
- Improving the freight system to meet growing freight needs is critical to the nation's economic competitiveness
- Consumer demand shifts such as the rise in e-commerce/quick delivery is shifting supply chains
- Public investment in the nation's multimodal freight infrastructure is chronically inadequate to meet system demands
- National strategy should be developed that guides long-term planning
- Sufficient levels of funding should be provided that are dedicated, sustainable and flexible
- A merit-based criteria for funding allocation should be implemented
- A partnership should be formed with the private sector
- Mr. Chuck Baker, President, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
- Short Lines Railroad operate nearly 50,000 miles of track constituting 30% of the national railroad network
- Short Line Railroads have the right economic stuff preserving service and jobs over track that was previously headed for abandonment under Class I ownership
- Short Line Railroads service the only connection to the larger national railroad network and some small towns in rural America
- Short Line Railroads lower transportation costs for the local shippers

- Short Line Railroads have the right environmental stuff as the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land
- Short Line Railroads have the right societal stuff as the safest option for moving freight by land
- Short Line Railroads should be directly eligible applicants for project grants similar to CRISI
- Mandating crew sizes on trains would be counter-productive because it would make trains less competitive with other transportation modes
- Ms. Anne Goodchild, Ph.D., Founding Director, Supply Chain Transportation and Logistics Center, University of Washington
- The last mile of the delivery destination should be considered when freight infrastructure investment is being discussed
- The last mile is essential, and expensive; and the most difficult and costly mile
- Online shopping rates are growing which is increasing demand for last mile delivery
- United States cities were not built to handle the nature and volume of current freight activity and are struggling to accommodate growth
- There is too much demand for too little space and evidence of poorly functioning system
- Delivery services present an opportunity to reduce emissions per package as they consolidate many packages into one vehicle
- Private carriers are struggling to comply with city regulations and remain financial competitive while meeting customer expectations
- Customers are benefiting from high levels of convenience but also experiencing high levels of congestion and suffering from effects of growing emissions
- Cities and towns are struggling to meet demands of multiple stakeholders and enforce existing rules
- Mr. Ian Jefferies, President & CEO, Association of American Railroads
- Railroads are indispensable to the United States economy, expanding existing markets and opening new ones
- Affordability of freight rails saves customers billions of dollars each year and enhances the global competitiveness of United States products
- Railroads are the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land
- Railroads have undertaken steps to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions
- Railroads help reduce the economic cost of highway congestion
- Railroads are much more capital intensive than most industries
- Rail operations are subject to stringent safety oversight by the Federal Railroad Administration
- Changing markets present a serious challenge to railroads
- Railroads must be flexible and innovative to meet change in industrial demands
- The railroad industry supports highway-rail grade crossings safety through engineering solutions, education and enforcement
- The freight railroad industry supports funding for Amtrak and public partnering with freight railroads
- Restore the highway trust fund to a true user-based fund
- Mr. Jason Mathers, Director, Vehicles & Freight Strategy, Environmental Defense Fund
- Implementation of policies that will reduce carbon pollution and set on a path of net-zero carbon emissions economy-wide by 2050 should be implemented now
- Every mode of freight transportation has a significant pollution footprint and health impacts on communities near freight facilities and highways
- Analysis of impacts of freight on public health in certain municipalities have been undertaken by the Environmental Defense Fund
- Solutions exist to significantly reduce impacts
- Further improvements from an emission standpoint for combustion engine trucks should be sought
- More should be gotten out of every move in that the United States is using only 43% of the capacity of freight trucks on the road

- The United States Congress should pass policies that increase the adoption of solutions and invest in the development of solutions that can further drive progress
- Encourage the production of zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles should be encouraged
- Development of ZEVs within front-line communities should be prioritized
- The development of appropriate charging infrastructures should be supported
- Mr. Jim Tymon, Executive Director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- Freight transportation is important in the context of surface transportation reauthorization
- Core principles of reauthorization include federal freight policy
- Specific freight policy recommendations are provided for the next surface transportation bill
- Ensure timely reauthorization of a long-term federal surface transportation bill
- A long-term, sustainable revenue solution for the Highway Trust Fund should be enacted
- Formula-based federal funding should be provided to the states and increased and prioritized
- Flexibility should be increased, program burdens reduced, and project delivery improved
- The state Department of Transportation's ability to harness innovation and technology should be supported

Copies of the witnesses' testimonies can be downloaded below:

<https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony-Aleman.PDF>

<https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony-Baker.pdf>

<https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony-Goodchild.pdf>

<https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony-Mathers.pdf>

<https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony-Tymon.pdf>