

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)
Subcommittee on Research & Technology
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

H.R. _____, the Surface Transportation Research and Development Act of 2015
H.R. 2886, the Future Transportation Research and Innovation for Prosperity Act
Subcommittee Markup

September 10, 2015

Thank you Madam Chairwoman. Transportation is integral to all of our lives and often evokes as many complaints as the weather. But while we can't change the weather, we can do a better job with our transportation system. And it is not just by building more; through transportation R&D we can develop and implement technology that will transform personal mobility and freight movement, allowing us to move people and goods more quickly and more safely. We are living in an exciting time where technology has already begun to increase the efficiency and safety of our transportation systems, and there is great potential for so much more. For that to happen though, we must make sure that we invest in research today that will unleash that potential and create a better future.

The bills and amendments we are considering today will help us do just that. My bill, the Future Transportation Research and Innovation for Prosperity, or Future TRIP, Act is focused on helping new technologies be developed and implemented. For example, the bill sets up a program which would establish priorities for research and deployment of technologies for connected and autonomous vehicles that promise to make our commutes safer and more efficient. The consulting firm McKinsey released a study this year showing that automated vehicles could reduce accidents by 90%, which could save tens of thousands of lives and tens of billions of dollars in property damage every year. Some experts believe that autonomous vehicle technology will allow us to move four times as many vehicles efficiently on the same roads we have today. Before we get to autonomous vehicles though, we need to establish better protocols for vehicles to communicate with each other and with infrastructure around them. This bill will help do that.

The bill also establishes a program on freight research which directs the Department of Transportation to create a strategic research plan to improve efficiency and safety of freight transportation, and focus resources on top priorities. Freight transportation is enormously important to the economy, and the volume of freight traffic is expected to grow by 25% in the next 10 years. My district in Chicagoland is a freight hub. While this keeps Chicago's economy running, it also lowers the quality of life for some as cars sit in traffic or at railroad grade crossings. Research on freight movement can help boost the economy and make life better in congested areas.

When developing this bill, I convened a number of roundtables of experts on transportation technology. One of the experts that joined us was from Peloton Technology, a company that

specializes in connecting two long-haul cargo trucks by computer so that they can travel within 10 meters of one another. Not only can this save space on the road, but the trucks are more fuel efficient since they draft off of one another, averaging an estimated 7% reduction in fuel costs at 65 miles an hour. And because the trucks are linked by wireless communication, both can brake simultaneously, reducing the number of accidents. Research can help bring about more technologies like this and improve coordination and planning across modes of transit.

There's many other pieces of the bill, including improvements to the University Transportation Centers Program, coordination of DOT research with other agencies, and a reauthorization of a pavement technologies deployment program I helped authorize in MAP-21. And the community has been very supportive, with endorsements in whole or in part from groups like ITS America and Transportation For America. I ask unanimous consent that a full list of the endorsing groups be entered into the record.

I have intentionally made my bill focus on policy matters rather than funding levels because it's easier to come to agreement over policy matters. However, I also believe that we need to increase our investments in transportation as a whole and technology research in particular. While I believe the programs in these bills can be productive in a funding-constrained environment, they will be much more productive if we can find a long term fix for our transportation funding problems. I have long sought to find bipartisan agreement on this issue and will continue to do so.

I want to thank Chairwoman Comstock for her bill, which focuses on multi-modal research, reducing traffic congestion, and improving rail safety, among other items. I also want to thank her and Chairman Smith for exercising the committee's jurisdiction when it comes to the research title of the highway and transit bill. Like the Chairwoman I serve of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, but it is this subcommittee's role to shape our nation's research agenda and help promote technology and innovation that will revolutionize mobility.

With that, I look forward to considering these amendments, and I yield back the balance of my time.