March 13, 2019

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton          The Honorable Rodney Davis
Chair                                               Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit               Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure    Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives             United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515                               Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Holmes Norton and Ranking Member Davis:

In anticipation of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit upcoming hearing entitled “Aligning Federal Surface Transportation Policy to Meet 21st Century Needs,” the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (“ITS America”) urges the Subcommittee to prioritize the research and deployment of intelligent mobility and smart infrastructure in the reauthorization of Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and an infrastructure package.

This hearing takes place at an important time. Just as transportation infrastructure was critical to the development of our economy in the 20th century, maintenance of existing infrastructure and deployment of intelligent mobility and smart infrastructure will be critical for our global competitiveness in this century. Advances in robotics, artificial intelligence, and wireless communications have inspired a race to make the next generation of transportation and infrastructure a reality. We are entering a technology revolution that will define the way people, goods, services, and information move in the 21st century. Part of that revolution includes new technologies that allow freedom of movement for those who have limited mobility access, such as people with disabilities, older adults, and people living in transit deserts. And most importantly, these technology advancements will finally help us begin to reduce the epidemic of fatalities on our roadways.

Members of ITS America are state and city departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, automotive manufacturers and suppliers, technology companies, engineering firms, and research universities. We are united around a shared vision of a better future transformed by intelligent mobility that is safer, greener, and smarter. ITS America looks forward to working with you on a FAST Act reauthorization and an infrastructure package that increases federal commitments to intelligent transportation technologies that save lives, improve mobility, promote sustainability, and increase efficiency and productivity.

ITS America is developing our FAST Act reauthorization policy, which we look forward to sharing with the Subcommittee early this summer. In the meantime, the following are our high-level transportation infrastructure policies that will frame the association’s FAST Act reauthorization platform:

**FAST Act Reauthorization:** In the 20th century, transportation was about moving cars. In the 21st century, the transportation landscape is rapidly evolving. New forms of mobility are being deployed even as others are being developed. A century ago with the invention of the car, Departments of Roads were created to deal with this new form of transportation. Those agencies are now Departments of Transportation, having grown to include other modes of transportation. Now those same agencies need to evolve again to provide seamless mobility. Instead of just moving cars, transportation is about moving people, data and freight. To keep pace with these advances in technology, which are transforming transportation, ITS America supports a FAST Act reauthorization that prioritizes federal policy and programs that make intelligent transportation deployment the rule rather than the exception and provides federal funding that encourage the rapid deployment of intelligent transportation technologies.
Increase Federal Investment in Transportation by Prioritizing Safety through Research and Deployment of Intelligent Mobility and Smart Infrastructure: Support increased revenue for intelligent mobility and smart infrastructure; ensure the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund; and transition to long-term and sustainable revenue for America’s transportation system. Only with such certainty will the nation finally see the research and the large-scale transformational deployments of intelligent transportation technologies - and most importantly, finally help us begin to reduce the epidemic of fatalities on our roadways.

Saving the Spectrum for Transportation Critical Safety Communications: New and developing vehicle to everything (V2X) technology that depends on the 5.9 GHz band is allowing us to finally address the lives lost and ruined on our nation’s roads. Our members are actively developing and deploying such technologies, which send hazard alerts to vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and traffic lights. These technologies can also enhance automated driving systems, which hold the promise to provide numerous economic, environmental, and societal benefits, such as decreased congestion and fuel consumption, and increased access for the elderly and disabled. These safety innovations require dedicated spectrum to ensure they work every time without signal interference. Millions of dollars have already been invested in this effort, including incorporating connected vehicle technologies into infrastructure by states and cities. ITS America strongly supports preserving the entire 5.9 GHz band for transportation safety applications. Speed matters when safety information is involved; sharing the band could compromise the speed and put lives as risk. With all the advancements and technology deployments, we are finally on the cusp of turning the corner to reduce deaths, but we need the spectrum to do that.

Increase Buildout of Alternative Fuel Vehicle Infrastructure: Transportation is now the largest source of carbon emissions in the United States, and carbon emissions from cars and light trucks account for almost one-sixth of the nation’s total emissions. ITS America supports policies in the transportation infrastructure sector that will help reduce transportation emissions. Given that automakers are committing to alternative fuel vehicles that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, ITS America supports standalone legislation and language in the reauthorization of the FAST Act and an infrastructure package that would provide increased federal funding to rapidly buildout alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure and new technologies such as inductive charging to speed the deployment of electric vehicles.

New Technology Grants to Support Congestion Relief: ITS America urges Congress to create a new emerging technology grant program to support congestion relief in metropolitan and urban cores as well as heavily traveled regions and freight corridors. Eligible projects would include capital and operational investments that improve system safety and performance such as priced-managed lanes; transportation demand management programs; strategic transit investments; advanced parking, freight delivery, and incident management systems; and programs to support the deployment of connected and autonomous vehicles, including vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communications technologies.

Mobility on Demand: Mobility on Demand (“MOD”) facilitates a transportation ecosystem in which consumers can research, book, and pay for all parts of their daily journeys—no matter the form of transportation (e.g., transit, rideshare/bikeshare, personal vehicles, micromobility, etc.)—on one integrated platform accessible on request. Developing the policy conditions for MOD to flourish will better enable consumers to identify and use the transportation options that best meet their mobility needs at any time. MOD promotes societal benefits such as a less congested, less costly, and more sustainable transportation system. Leveraging the insights gained from MOD data, new business models can be developed to enhance mobility and address unmet transportation needs. ITS America advocates for policies that promote MOD and remove roadblocks that limit or restrict federal funding for MOD and supports an increased national commitment to public transit as it will be a key component in any successful implementation of MOD. To that end, ITS America supports policies that promote arrangements between public transit agencies and other shared modes of transportation to help promote
first mile/last mile solutions as well as policies that foster alternative transportation modes. Additionally, we support increased funding levels for the MOD Sandbox program administered by the FTA Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation.

We look forward to working with the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit on a reauthorization of the FAST Act and an infrastructure package that prioritize investments in intelligent mobility and smart infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Shailen P. Bhatt
President and CEO
Intelligent Transportation Society of America

Cc: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
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