



The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), thank you for your continued leadership and the Committee's dedication to advancing transportation solutions that serve communities of all sizes. AMPO is a nonprofit membership organization that serves the needs and interests of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) nationwide. As federally mandated and locally driven organizations, MPOs are key to ensuring that federal transportation investment reflects regional priorities while meeting national goals.

We especially appreciated the testimony at "Constructing the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: Stakeholders' Perspectives" by Mayor Kate Gallego. Local governments and their planning partners bring deep expertise and a proven track record in addressing today's transportation challenges. It's essential that we recognize the obstacles they face in shaping and delivering the infrastructure solutions our communities need. We commend the committee for your focus on addressing transportation challenges across all communities.

Mayor Gallego's testimony highlighted a fundamental problem: federal funding is needed to support the places where people live, work, and travel. Local governments are responsible for more than 75 percent of the nation's road miles, yet, on average, they receive only 14 percent of federal transportation funds through suballocations. The consequences can be felt nationwide. When non-highway streets go unmaintained or regional corridors remain unfunded, the effects ripple through the economy and our communities. Freight slows down, consumer costs rise, safety risks increase, and infrastructure liabilities grow. Delays in project delivery further erode the value of each federal dollar and reduce public trust in the system.

MPOs serve as regional conveners, bringing together local governments to identify shared priorities, coordinate long-range planning, and reflect community input. They help ensure that infrastructure investments meet actual needs and deliver lasting value. Federal law requires coordination between states and MPOs, but this process should be revisited to ensure clarity and transparency. State project selection processes are not always clearly communicated or easily accessible to the public. Projects that MPOs have already programmed into their Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) may be delayed because of a lack of a clear and transparent process. MPOs can face unobligated balances of federal funds, not due to local inaction, but often because of procedural delays or shifting priorities, beyond their control.

For example, an AMPO survey found that on average, nearly 90 percent of unobligated suballocated Surface Transportation Block Grant funds were already programmed in MPO respondents' TIPs and awaiting State action. These delays are avoidable and costly. Brookings research shows that 33 states do



not use public-facing project selection systems. More than half of states suballocate less than 10 percent of federal transportation dollars to local or regional governments. Only two states—Colorado and Utah—consistently align state planning with MPO long-range plans. These examples can provide a roadmap for how to better improve the system.

As the mayor highlighted, when local and regional agencies have a meaningful role in transportation decision-making, all communities are able to improve safety, reduce congestion, support economic growth, and respond more effectively to locally-led and driven improvements. We respectfully urge Congress to recognize the important role of regions and locals. With the right tools, funding, and authority, regional organizations and their local partners are ready to deliver results to the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Keyrouze".

Bill Keyrouze
Executive Director
Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
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