

Mayor Garcetti's Testimony as Prepared for Delivery
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
February 7, 2019

Chairman De Fazio, Ranking Member Graves, Members of this Committee:

My name is Eric Garcetti, and I wear two hats today: one as Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Infrastructure Task Force, and the other, as Mayor of a great American city: Los Angeles.

I'm here with a message from America's local communities: it's time to pass a comprehensive national infrastructure package.

For most people, infrastructure isn't about miles paved or dollars pledged — it's about less time in traffic and more time with our kids. It's about clean water from our taps and a smooth commute to work.

This Congress has the chance to make history, reignite homegrown American industries, and create millions of middle-class jobs.

Two years ago, we heard two presidential candidates pledge to make billions of dollars in infrastructure investment.

The American people haven't seen a penny.

But the same night that a president was elected, voters from Georgia to Ohio to Washington state green lit \$230 billion in infrastructure measures.

L.A. alone passed a \$120 billion measure — the largest local infrastructure initiative in history — times two.

That one measure is creating 787,000 recession-proof jobs.

No matter where they live or how they vote, Americans will do what it takes to better their communities.

That's why, a year and a half ago, I joined with state, business, and labor leaders to found Accelerator for America — a new non-profit that's focused on getting infrastructure moving.

We conducted a bipartisan poll, which showed that the top two issues that Americans want Republicans and Democrats to work on together are healthcare and infrastructure.

In 2019, believe it or not, 80 percent of Americans agree on something, and their ask is clear: invest in this country and build a future we can believe in.

Fifty years from now, I want to look back and know that this Congress marked a turning point for America — that this Congress transformed the foundation on which this country is built.

Our country needs you.

Because nations around the world are mapping out infrastructure blueprints for the next 50 or 100 years — but in America, we limp through two or five-year band aids.

It's time to think big.

And that's why I am submitting in my testimony a trillion-dollar plan supported by America's local communities: rural, urban, big, small, north, south, east, west, red and blue. And \$612 billion of this plan is under this committee's direct jurisdiction.

So, today, I ask you to consider three things.

One, encourage leverage. Two, reward innovation. Three, consider the long-term maintenance of our nation's infrastructure.

First, leverage.

Leverage local government. Leverage state government.

And, yes, leverage the private sector through smart P3s that don't give up public ownership, but instead accelerate — and help reduce the cost of — transportation projects.

Second, reward innovation.

When you consider the needs of our roads, bridges, rail, and airports, I ask that you also consider the innovations happening at warp speed in every sector, and that this innovation is rewarded.

In L.A. — America's car capital — we also have the headquarters of Hyperloop. We're home to the electric scooter revolution. New technologies are excavating tunnels faster than ever. And electric cars are dramatically reducing our emissions.

We want these innovations to not only be invented in America — they should be exported from America.

And that requires some flexibility from the federal government in what projects benefit from your investment.

Third, consider maintenance.

We tend to fixate on future projects.

But at a time when the D.C. metro is crumbling, New York subways don't run on time, and Boston commuters had to kick their way out of a smoke-filled train, we also need to create lasting revenue streams — without sacrificing social service programs — so that we can maintain infrastructure before it falls into disrepair.

Since 2013, 27 states have passed a gas tax to preserve roads and fix crumbling bridges.

And the measure that L.A. passed two years back?

It's evergreen. The funding stream has no sunset — and that means there are already 40 years of infrastructure projects funded and on the books — today.

Americans want the peace of mind of knowing that the train we're building for them today, will be there to get their grandkids to work as we start approaching the next century.

On behalf of mayors across this country, I'm here to tell you:

We will do everything in our power to help this committee get the votes to pass a meaningful infrastructure package.

We are here as your partners, because Americans want us to get this done.

Thank you.