

Speech to ITSA

It's an honor to be here today with such a diverse group of transportation advocates who share the common goal of moving our transportation system into the 21st century. For those of you I haven't met before, I represent the Southwest side of Chicago and the adjoining Cook and Will County suburbs. Transportation is critical to my district. From highways, to aviation, to railroads, to pipelines, to inland waterways, to Great Lakes shipping, and beyond – my district is at the center of it all.

Unfortunately, a significant amount of our infrastructure is decades old. That keeps a lot of us on T&I focused on keeping up with state of good repair needs while funding new projects as best as possible during tight fiscal times, but I've always said that we can't forget to look to the future. Of course, that's due in part to the fact that I'm the Ranking Member on the Research & Technology Subcommittee of the Science, Space & Technology Committee, and I've been working to bring transportation research and technology development to the front of the discussion. There's simply too much potential in this field for Congress to miss out on an opportunity to foster it in the next surface transportation bill.

I see incredible opportunities for transportation to benefit from rapidly advancing automation, connectivity, and information technologies. We need to find innovative ways to dramatically ease congestion, improve personal mobility, and cut energy use. We need big solutions to keep our country moving.

There are opportunities for connected technologies to benefit mass transit and traffic management systems in order to improve the efficiency of our existing physical infrastructure, as well as promote safety. To that end, I've been pleased to work on advancing a sound and forward-thinking research title for the surface transportation reauthorization.

Earlier this month, my bill, the Future TRIP Act, was advanced through the Research & Technology subcommittee. The Future TRIP Act faces many technology and policy hurdles head-on, and it was a product of numerous stakeholder roundtables and meetings, including a number with ITSA and ITSA members, to find out what major initiatives are ongoing and how Congress can support them.

Before diving in, it's best to first look at its four areas of focus:

- 1: laying a foundation for broad scale adoption of automated vehicle and connected vehicle technology
- 2: helping harness new technologies

3: encouraging and increasing stakeholder involvement in research

4: improving data collection and freight planning

First, laying a foundation for broad scale adoption of CV/AV technology. Congress needs to be at the forefront of this issue given the spectrum, cybersecurity, and overall deployment issues in this exciting area. To make sure we are the forefront, the Future TRIP Act would require DOT to consult and coordinate with other agencies and the private sector to establish an agenda for CV/AV research, as well as a strategic 3-year plan with guidance on implementing this technology.

In support of this, a competitively selected Intelligent Transportation Systems Science & Technology Center would be established to bring in the brightest minds on the issue to work on this issue and develop deployment guidance with DOT. Technology in this area is changing so rapidly that decision makers must be more nimble and informed than ever before. We must foster the types of collaborations between the public and private sector that will keep our country at the forefront.

Second, the Future TRIP Act helps harness new technologies. While intelligent transportation systems may be the future, we must also continue to pursue improvements in the infrastructure systems, materials, and safety assurance capabilities that we rely on today.

In support of that, the Future TRIP act would reauthorize the Accelerated Implementation and Deployment of Pavement Technologies Program (AIDP) and it would reauthorize the Commercial Remote Sensing Products and Spatial Information Technologies program to solve multi-modal challenges through unmanned aerial systems.

Third, the Future TRIP Act encourages and increases stakeholder involvement in research by making sure that university researchers, state DOT officials, and executive branch entities are fully involved.

One set of changes it makes is to the University Transportation Center program. These changes focus on broadening the focus of UTCs to include multimodalism as a research activity and improving the grant application process. In addition to modifications to the conventional research community's involvement, my bill would make changes at the local, state, and national level.

It would help state and local research by allowing travel for research and technology purposes, including workshops and conferences, and activities related to developing a culture of innovation. On the national level, it would require the Office of Science and

Technology Policy to convene an interagency working group to develop a national transportation research framework in order to identify opportunities for coordination and a plan for moving research out of the lab.

Fourth, the bill improves Data Collection and Freight Planning. As transportation planners look to maximize efficiency, reduce congestion, and decrease costs, proper data collection and effective freight research are critical ingredients to a well-planned transportation network.

The FUTURE Trip Act makes reforms to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by providing it with the sole decision-making authority in the collection, analysis, publication, and dissemination of data and statistics, and it would ensure that it has final authority over its budget. Armed with this new independence, BTS would be tasked with working on expanding the existing collection of motorized and non-motorized roadway user travel data.

BTS would also be tasked with collaborating with FHWA and DOT on a freight fluidity measurement effort that would collect, analyze, and present freight data in a timely and comprehensive manner. Further support would be provided to freight planning by reauthorizing the National Cooperative Freight Transportation Research Program, which would gather stakeholders to work on this issue.

With our economy moving from a “bricks to clicks” system with more and more deliveries, we expect that traffic will almost double by 2020 and we need to be ready for it not just from an infrastructure perspective, but a planning perspective as well.

While the Future TRIP Act has made it through subcommittee and the Science committee is doing its part, it looks like the road to comprehensive surface transportation reauthorization is more difficult. But I will keep fighting to get it done.

We need the Federal government to come to the table to work with industry to accelerate innovation. There’s much to gain and I look forward to working with you all to maximize the safety, economic, and quality of life benefits that are on the horizon.