

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Media Contacts: Zachary Kurz
(202) 225-6371

**Statement of Research and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.)
Hearing on the Future of Surface Transportation**

Chairman Bucshon: The research and development activities at the Department of Transportation (DOT) are vital to the nation's prosperity. These efforts support critical infrastructure, and enhance both our economic competitiveness and way of life. The pathway forward for these programs continues to present significant challenges for Congress. We need to ask difficult questions to determine how best to address the issues facing our aging infrastructure within the limitations of our current budget environment.

In addition to my role as Chairman of this Subcommittee, I also serve on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. In that Committee, we have had several hearings on new car technology and what role Congress and DOT have in research and testing this technology.

In 2014, the DOT annually supported more than \$1 billion in research, development, and technology deployment (RD&T) activities focused on surface modes of transportation. These programs were last authorized in 2012 in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), on which I served as a conferee. These programs are primarily supported through the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Fund. Trust fund revenue, at its current spend rate, will be insufficient to carry out authorized programs. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is currently considering how to resolve this problem before Trust Fund depletion.

Advancements in materials and technology, such as connected vehicles, autonomous cars, and positive train control, can help achieve long-term cost savings by reducing congestion, increasing economic output, reducing environmental effects, and improving the durability and lifespan of our transportation projects. It is therefore critical that we find a way to maintain a healthy, substantive research base behind our state and local transportation initiatives.

Today's hearing will also allow us to examine research, development and technology priorities at the United States Department of Transportation and to understand the important policy issues regarding the future of surface transportation. In addition, this hearing will provide an opportunity to understand RD&T activities in surface transportation both at federally sponsored research institutions as well as RD&T conducted by the private sector, and understand how these advances are being utilized by state and local governments.

I look forward to hearing today's testimony and to a productive and fruitful discussion on U.S. surface transportation research, development, technology, investments, priorities, and policies. I hope you will continue to work with us to maximize the effectiveness of surface transportation RD&T programs as we attempt to reauthorize our federal surface transportation programs. Again, thank you all for joining us today.