



**Opening Statement of
Chairman Steve Chabot
House Committee on Small Business**
*Hearing: “The Road Ahead: Small Businesses and the Need for a Long-Term Surface
Transportation Reauthorization”*
June 3, 2015

Good morning. Thank you all for being here as we discuss the importance of our nation’s surface transportation infrastructure, with a focus on the small firms that help build it, and those that depend on it. I want to thank each of our witnesses who have agreed to provide testimony today.

There are lots of projects throughout our nation that I could cite as examples of why our infrastructure is important, but none that is closer to home for me than the Brent Spence Bridge. This is a bridge that connects Ohio to Kentucky; the Midwest to the South. It carries 172,000 cars and \$1 billion in commerce every day, yet it is considered functionally obsolete.

I’ve worked towards a solution for the Brent Spence Bridge long before I became Chairman of this Committee. And I’m pleased the Committee is able to hold today’s hearing to examine how our communities and small businesses suffer from outdated infrastructure.

America has always been a place where citizens are free to chase down dreams and pursue happiness. Well, infrastructure gets us there. It makes commerce possible. And the Brent Spence Bridge is the perfect example of why we need a long-term transportation bill that will keep America moving forward.

When you speak to folks back home about infrastructure, the first thing that naturally comes up is traffic. I bet that our Ranking Member has a horror story or two about crossing the Brooklyn Bridge in her district during rush hour. Time spent in traffic causes more than just a headache – it costs Americans real money. If you are a florist, getting stuck in traffic means your deliveries aren’t as fresh or as fast as they should be. If you are an HVAC repairman, it means you can’t make as many house calls in a day as you otherwise would, which directly impacts your bottom line. If you are a manufacturer, it means a longer time for your products to get from one place to another, which is money out of your pocket.

Improving our infrastructure is about making American businesses more competitive and making sure we have access to the goods and services we use every day, and keeping them affordable for American families. And it’s about jobs. Not just construction jobs, but jobs across the economy, from manufacturing, to retail, and just about everything in between.

Small businesses play an important role in all of this. On the construction side, small producers provide the stone and sand to build new highways. Small equipment distributors rent and maintain heavy equipment used on construction sites. And in the end, a small business that

needs to ship an order of their goods across the river can do so quicker and cheaper with a new and modern bridge in place.

Our country needs a long-term surface transportation bill to provide states and localities the certainty they need to tackle large, multi-year projects that fit the needs of their growing communities. Just last month, Congress passed a short-term extension to keep the Highway Trust Fund operational through the end of July. While that was necessary to ensure things didn't come to a grinding halt, we must find bipartisan solutions that lead to a long-term plan to improve the infrastructure that keeps our country moving forward.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being with us today. I have personally testified several times about the national significance of the Brent Spence Bridge. But since I'm on the dais today, I asked a fellow Cincinnati to come share its story and importance to our nation.

If we want to do something positive for the millions of Americans that rely on small businesses to put food on the table, we have to get projects like the Brent Spence Bridge done. We owe it to the American people to invest in those projects that produce long-term savings, keep us competitive, and most importantly, create American jobs.

Again, thank you to all the witnesses for coming. I now yield to our Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, for her opening remarks.