

Chairman Susan M. Collins Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies

Markup of the FY2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Bill

June 5, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

The Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development will come to order. We convene today to mark up the fiscal year 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

I have worked closely with the Ranking Member, Senator Reed, in drafting this bill, and want to express my gratitude for his many contributions. We have also received input from 70 Senators with more than 800 requests, all of which we carefully evaluated.

I would note that the most frequent HUD request was to fund the CDBG program, which the Administration's budget proposed to eliminate. We provided \$3.3 billion for this important economic development program.

The allocation for the fiscal year 2019 Transportation and Housing Appropriations bill is \$71.4 billion, which is about \$1 billion above the current funding levels. Of the total allocation, \$26.6 billion is for DOT, \$44.5 billion is for HUD, and the remainder funds small independent agencies like the National Transportation Safety Board. This funding level allows the subcommittee to invest in our nation's infrastructure, while fully funding the renewal of housing assistance for low-income seniors and other vulnerable populations, such as teenagers and veterans who are homeless.

The bill provides \$1 billion for the popular BUILD grant program, previously known as TIGER, and provides increased funding levels for highway and transit grant programs to help address some of our nation's critical infrastructure needs. I want to make it clear that these funding levels are meant to supplement funding from the Highway Trust Fund and should not be viewed as a replacement for the long-term, sustained funding needed from the Highway Trust Fund for our state and local governments. The Administration should work with the authorizing committees to reauthorize the FAST Act and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Highway Trust Fund.

I am also pleased to announce the bill once again provides \$300 million to continue replacement of state maritime academy training vessels, which are essential for training the next generation of U.S. mariners.

The bill continues the necessary investments in our nation's air traffic control system by providing \$1 billion for NextGen programs, and provides \$750 million in additional funding from the general fund for airport grants.

For HUD, the bill provides \$3.3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program, \$1.4 billion for the HOME program, and \$2.6 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants, with a focus on homeless youth and survivors of domestic violence. We also continue funding housing vouchers for

the successful VASH program, which has reduced the number of homeless veterans by 46% since 2010.

For our aging population, the bill provides \$678 million for housing for seniors, of which \$10 million will be used to enable seniors to “age-in-place” by remaining in their own homes, and of which \$51 million is for the development of new housing units for low-income seniors. The bill also increases funding for lead hazard grants to \$260 million in an effort to accelerate the progress being made to eliminate dangerous childhood lead exposure.

Let me comment on what this bill does not include. This bill does not contain controversial riders in the hope that it can be marked up and moved to the floor in a bipartisan manner. I urge my colleagues to support the T-HUD bill today and on Thursday in the full Committee markup.

In keeping with the longstanding tradition of the Subcommittee, I would ask members to refrain from offering amendments until the full Committee markup on Thursday, but Senator Reed and I would appreciate knowing of any amendments as soon as possible so that we may begin working with our colleagues.

My thanks to Senator Reed, all members of the subcommittee, and our staff for working together to produce this bipartisan bill.

With that, I turn to Senator Reed for his remarks.

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