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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
June 11, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### BUILDING A TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that after 55 months in control, my Republican friends have scheduled their first hearing on transportation and finance. This is a very important, very welcome development, as welcome as it is long overdue. I appreciate my friend, PAUL RYAN, the chairman of the committee, keeping his

word that we would actually have a hearing.

Now, the question is whether this is going to be one that is more or less perfunctory, sort of a plain vanilla, or whether it is going to be the start of a critical dialogue involving not just ideologues, but the people who do more than just study the issue, hear from the vast army of people who plan, build, maintain, and use our transportation infrastructure. There is a unique, shared, forceful vision. Congress should spend the time not just to listen to those stakeholders, but to understand how they got to where they are and what we need to do.

We shouldn't settle for half steps to just get past the next transportation deadline, which is looming next month, which would be the 34th short-term extension. Just as bad or worse, we would fail to give the country the bold transportation investment that is so sorely needed.

The next hearings are even more important following next Wednesday's effort. That is the time to actually follow regular order, to debate real options.

I have introduced a path. After 20 years of working on transportation funding, it is still the simplest, the best, and the most widely supported. It is the widest coalition, in fact, of any major issue confronting people on Capitol Hill. It includes the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, contractors, transit, local government, bicyclists, engineers. It includes the AAA, representing automobile users, and the American Trucking Association. They all support, for the first time in 22 years, raising the Federal gas tax.

We are in the problem we are in now because we are paying for 2015 transportation needs with 1993 dollars. It doesn't work.

My approach would not just raise the gas tax, index the gas tax, but work to

abolish the gas tax because it is no longer a sustainable long-term solution. We can, in fact, replace it with a much more viable, effective, fair system based on road user charges, which we are experimenting with in Oregon, and States around the country are looking at.

In the meantime, we ought to step up and do our job on the gas tax. It is interesting that six red States have already raised the gas tax this year. If it was good enough for Eisenhower, if it was good enough for Ronald Reagan, who used his Thanksgiving Day speech in 1982 to summon Congress back to more than double the gas tax, which he and Tip O'Neill did, it ought to be good enough for us today.

Let's discuss, examine, and understand all the viable solutions, the health of our infrastructure, our economy, and the impacts on the people we serve.

Whatever solution we come up with must meet three tests: It must raise enough to do the job of giving America its first 6-year transportation bill since 1998; it must be dedicated to allow the certainty to be able to build a transportation vision for the future; and it must be sustainable so that we don't end up back in the same place in a year or 2 or 4 or even 5.

My legislation would provide 210 additional billion dollars, enough for the transportation committee to fashion that vision for the future. It is ironclad dedicated over the next 6 years, but it is sustainable because, if Congress hasn't moved to abolish the gas tax by then, at least we don't fall off a cliff.

There was a time when America had the best infrastructure in the world. Sadly, that time has passed. There was a time when infrastructure used to be bipartisan. I am hopeful that if we step up to the plate, approach it in a bipartisan fashion, we can do the job so that we start repairing infrastructure that is now rated 25th or 27th in the world, and going down.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g.,  1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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