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Senate Budget Committee Chair Pens White Paper on Importance of Transportation Investment, HTF Solvency

Sen. Patty Murray, chair of the Senate Budget Committee, this week published a white paper that explores the need for additional transportation infrastructure investments, Highway Trust Fund solvency, and the importance of certainty for state transportation departments in order to maintain and expand their transportation networks.

Murray's paper, "Repairing our Infrastructure," first recounted the reasons why stronger investment is needed in our infrastructure—structurally deficient bridges, years of underinvestment, growing congestion on our roadways, etc.—and how those reasons impact the entire U.S. economy and every citizen.

"The impacts of America's infrastructure deficit are felt most acutely by our businesses, consumers, and families," Murray said in her paper. "When businesses cannot move their goods quickly, because of congestion, bottlenecks between transportation modes, or weather-related disruptions, it drives up costs. Inadequate infrastructure drives up supply chain costs for manufacturers and retailers, constraining global trade."

While the current situation is troublesome, Murray said, it can be fixed. Murray said it is important to remember five basic principles:

1. Funding certainty and adequate investments are required for a modern transportation system.
2. Public investment increases are needed, but new private sector investment avenues should be provided to supplement federal funding.
3. Transportation policies should provide certain flexibility, "enabling planning and solutions tailored to local problems" and that are also "ready to adapt to a changing climate."
4. Investment in transportation infrastructure is vital, but infrastructure in general must be tackled, such as water, energy, and the broadband network.
5. Infrastructure investments pay dividends—long-term economic and fiscal benefits cannot be ignored.

Murray said the best start to investing in the nation's transportation infrastructure is to address the Highway Trust Fund crisis, echoing what the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Board of Directors called for last week at the association's annual meeting (see related AASHTO Journal story [here](#)).

"Addressing the crisis with the Highway Trust Fund is a necessary first step in tackling the broader infrastructure deficit our nation faces," according to Murray's paper. "Providing multi-year funding will give states

the certainty they need to plan longer-term projects to address some of the nation's most pressing transportation needs. In addition, by supporting projects that ease congestion and make our roads and bridges safer, we will create jobs and spark economic growth. Ensuring the Highway Trust Fund has multi-year certainty will pave the way for enacting a forward-looking infrastructure system that is efficient, resilient, and meets the needs of American families, communities, and businesses."

Murray's white paper is available [here](#).

Questions regarding this article may be directed to editor@ashtojournal.org.

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444 N Capitol St. NW - Suite 249 - Washington, DC 20001.
