

Prepared Statement of Hon. Ted Stevens
U.S. Senator from Alaska

Thank you, Senator Pryor, for holding this hearing, and thank you, Commissioners, for joining us today.

This Commission was established in Section 1909 of SAFETEA—LU and was charged by Congress with thoroughly reviewing the Nation’s programs, and with preparing a conceptual plan that outlines a long-term transportation vision over the next 50 years.

The Commission held 22 hearings over 20 months of study and took testimony from over 300 witnesses.

Issues regarding an increase of the gas tax and the role of public-private partnerships, however, prevented the Commissioners from reaching unanimous recommendations.

However, there are areas of agreement among all the Commissioners. These recommendations have the greatest promise of influencing transportation policy in the future.

The Commissioners all recognize the importance of a strong, interconnected transportation system to support our Nation’s economic prosperity and growth.

To improve our transportation system, it will be necessary to simplify and streamline Federal transportation programs and funding categories. This will provide the states with more flexibility in how they spend their transportation dollars. Currently, it takes between 7 and 10 years to complete a highway project. This is entirely too long and makes completing projects more expensive.

I am looking forward to hearing from our witnesses today and learning how we can improve our transportation system now.

Thank you, again, Senator Pryor, for holding this hearing.