

**MR. CARLOS A. MONJE JR.
COUNSELOR TO THE SECRETARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION FOR POLICY-DESIGNATE
statement before the
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**NOMINATIONS HEARING
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Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Thune, Members of the Committee, I am humbled to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Policy.

I'd like to thank my wife, Anne Filipic, for being with me, and for her support and love. I'd like to thank my friends and colleagues who are here. Finally, I'd like to recognize my parents and big sisters who couldn't be here, but who taught me the values that led to my career in public service. Transportation has a particular meaning for me. My parents immigrated to the United States because my dad, a naval architect, accepted a job at the New Orleans shipyards. I literally wouldn't be an American if it wasn't for the transportation industry.

As a former Senate staffer, I have a deep respect for the confirmation process, so I am honored for your time and consideration today.

I have served in a variety of positions in the executive and legislative branches for more than a decade. Currently, I serve as Counselor to the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation. I've been privileged to work at an agency with a visionary leader, a clear mission, a dedicated workforce, and a strong partnership with its congressional oversight committees.

Secretary Foxx directed me to focus on high priority policy initiatives, such as the GROW AMERICA Act surface reauthorization proposal, the TIGER discretionary grant program, and promoting mobility, equity, and economic development in rural and urban areas.

I've also had the opportunity to see firsthand the impact that infrastructure has on communities. How critical freight movement is to our economy. How much workers depend on reliable transit and uncongested roads to get to work. How good jobs and opportunity can flow from well-planned projects.

I've also seen the consequences when infrastructure doesn't keep up with demands: crumbling overpasses, warped rail lines, and missed opportunities for economic development. To address this nationwide challenge, the administration proposed the GROW AMERICA Act, which would

provide reliable, substantial funding for road, rail and transit projects. The Act includes a number of critical improvements to our safety programs, improves rail and freight planning, and streamlines project delivery so roads and bridges can get built more quickly.

If confirmed, I hope to consult closely with this Committee as we work together to strengthen our surface transportation programs. I also look forward to working with the Committee on the reauthorization of our important aviation laws so that we can maintain our position as a global leader in aviation safety, deliver a modern air traffic control system, and ensure aviation access to communities across the country

Prior to coming to DOT, I worked five years in the White House. For three of those years, I served as Chief of Staff of the Domestic Policy Council (DPC), where I helped manage a team of 50 senior policy aides. I helped supervise agency budgets, advocated administration positions, and planned policy actions. DPC's portfolio includes education, energy, health care, poverty, criminal justice, civil rights, rural policy, tribal issues, faith, as well as transportation.

Before that, I worked to improve federal disaster recovery efforts, to support our veterans, and to give more Americans the opportunity to volunteer in their communities. I worked within the White House Office of Social Innovation, which sought new ways for the federal government to work with the nonprofit and private sectors.

My most personal work came in making the federal government a better partner to local communities following disasters. When the administration began in 2009, too many Gulf Coast residents, including those in my home town of New Orleans, were trapped in Post-Katrina red tape. One Mississippi official compared the federal government to quote--a dysfunctional grocery store-- where you have to check out at the end of each aisle. The administration has dramatically improved that track record by focusing on outcomes on the ground and cutting down administrative stovepipes. And lessons learned from our efforts have also improved how we partner with communities every day.

I am grateful to Secretary Foxx and President Obama for their support. If confirmed, I will work to promote innovation to get more out of the taxpayer dollars entrusted to us, to strengthen our safety framework, and to help our infrastructure projects serve as the foundation for stronger communities.

I will also work with this committee to strengthen the Department and achieve better results for the American people. I know that you and your staff have deep expertise on our shared infrastructure challenges, that your knowledge of the needs of your constituents is unrivaled, and that your role as a partner in governing is vital to our shared success.

Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Thune, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for your consideration and the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.