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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

April 19, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write seeking further information on the Freight Logistics Optimization Works (FLOW) information sharing initiative of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). I support the principle of collaboration and information sharing among supply chain stakeholders. Given the uneven efforts of the Administration to address freight congestion to date and the various ongoing federal and private sector efforts to enable data sharing, I would appreciate additional information on the implementation of this program.

The supply chain crisis remains at the forefront of public concern. Since 2020, U.S. manufacturers, retailers, consumers, and workers have experienced enormous freight and supply chain congestion. These issues permeate every aspect of our economy. I continue to hear from many stakeholders about the complexity of moving such vast amounts of cargo, as well as the associated delays and increased costs in freight transportation.

On March 22, 2022, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation unanimously reported the Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA) and my Facilitating Relief for Efficient Intermodal Gateways to Handle Transportation Act (FREIGHT Act). Both of these pieces of legislation would help address major challenges to the supply chain. Relevant to the topic of the FLOW initiative, OSRA would provide the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) new authorities related to data, such as promoting transparency from common carriers through quarterly reporting. Additionally, the FREIGHT Act would enable the FMC to require data sharing on a short-term basis to address emergency situations and authorize DOT to report on dwell time statistics.

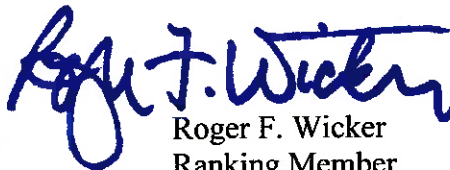
Any work to enable greater efficiencies in the freight transportation system must be usable for the enormous number of stakeholders who work in, and rely on, the freight network. To be successful, the FLOW initiative should adopt a balanced, open-minded approach that incorporates feedback from a broad array of transportation stakeholders and shippers.

As we move forward to address the challenges of the supply chain crisis, I urge you to seek and heed advice from supply chain participants when considering the implementation of new data sharing methods. Additionally, I request answers to the following questions:

- Did DOT consult stakeholders when developing this initiative? If so, which stakeholders?
- What organizational structure does DOT anticipate for this initiative, and what is the statutory authority for this initiative?
- What budget does DOT anticipate for this program, and what is the funding source?
- What are the measurable goals of the initiative, and what are the anticipated outcomes (such as a report, recommendations, etc.)?
- Will the public be able to provide perspective on freight data needs for the initiative through a notice and comment process, open meetings, or other means?
- How long does DOT anticipate it will maintain this initiative?
- What types of information does DOT anticipate will be discussed during this initiative?
- Will DOT be involved in the development, implementation, and maintenance of any data sharing system or program developed through this initiative, or does DOT anticipate these efforts will be private-sector led?
- How will DOT balance the need for actionable information with any concerns about confidential or security-sensitive information?
- How will this initiative interact with other similar initiatives, such as the FMC's data initiative or private sector initiatives?
- Will this initiative seek to create standardized definitions for critical data elements? If so what will be the process for reaching consensus?

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee