

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I want to congratulate you on your historic confirmation as Secretary of Transportation! I sincerely appreciate your perspective on the transportation and infrastructure challenges facing cities and states across the country, including those in my home state of Michigan. As a former mayor myself, I am thrilled to have someone who truly understands the needs of the communities I represent—and those across the country—as we work to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure for generations to come.

Admittedly, I was delighted to hear of your willingness to address our aging infrastructure to build back better, strengthen our economic competitiveness, and create good paying jobs during your confirmation hearing. One of my top priorities in the 117th Congress is to “fix the damn roads,” a pointedly accurate statement championed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Michigan’s infrastructure is critical for our economic progress, yet because of underinvestments in our roads and bridges, drivers are burdened with vehicle repair costs and small businesses suffer due to a loss in productivity. According to a 2019 report from the Transportation Asset Management Council, 39 and 40 percent of major state roads in Michigan were rated in poor and fair condition, respectively, while only 21 percent were considered to be in good condition. Similarly, in the American Society of Civil Engineers’ 2018 report card, Michigan received an overall grade of D+, describing our systems as “old and outdated,” illustrating the severity of Michigan’s infrastructure challenges. With the economic downturn caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, investing in infrastructure and good paying jobs are more imperative to Michigan’s economic development than ever before.

Home to the Motor City, Michigan’s automotive manufacturing industry has always been a catalyst for our economy, and the Big Three have shaped the face of America’s automotive industry for decades. I am proud to represent General Motors’ global headquarters in Detroit, as well as the thousands of auto workers who serve as the backbone of our manufacturing base. Recently, these automakers have made substantial commitments that will lead to

transformational change in the industry, while also tackling climate change in a meaningful way. I support President Joe Biden's commitment to building out an expansive electric vehicle charging infrastructure to help boost electric vehicle deployment, while simultaneously creating good-paying jobs for our workforce. Please consider me a partner on this front as we collectively work to prepare and strengthen the standing of American auto workers and manufacturers.

As a representative for the Motor City, I look forward to your leadership at the Department in directing robust investment in our country's aging infrastructure, and I am eager to work with you on shared transportation priorities important to my district and the state of Michigan. As such, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss areas for collaboration and how we can advance meaningful change that equitably serves all Americans. I also look forward to welcoming you and Chasten back to his home state so we can tour some of the outstanding automotive and infrastructure projects that the 14th District has to offer. Thank you, and congratulations on your new role!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda L. Lawrence". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brenda" being the most prominent part.

Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress