

Statement for the Record  
Ways and Means Member Day Hearing

Members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on my legislative priorities in the 116th Congress.

As members of this committee know well, it is past time for Congress and the nation to re-think our revenue model for infrastructure investment.

While the motor fuels taxes and the highway trust fund helped build a system that powered American economic growth through the 20th century, their utility is threatened by both the rise of more efficient vehicles and the increasing reliance on intermodal and multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

Revenue concepts like a road user charge (RUC) can address many of the shortcomings of the motor fuels taxes, but I believe that Congress should implement a freight shipment fee as part of a package of revenues to fund infrastructure investment moving forward.

This fee will not favor or disadvantage any one freight mode, and it will raise substantial revenue for needed investment in freight infrastructure—particularly for intermodal and multi-modal projects that often face hurdles to compete for federal investment.

My legislation, the National Multimodal and Sustainable Freight Infrastructure Act (H.R. 2723), would raise over \$10 billion each year for these needed improvements with a small one-percent fee on the cost of goods movement.

As you may know from your own states and districts, the current INFRA grant program for freight projects is over-subscribed 12-to-1. That means dozens of worthwhile projects to improve the movement of freight across the country are delayed or shelved each year. Dedicated, sustainable funding for these projects from a freight user fee will help make these improvements a reality.

I stand willing to work with any of you to provide dedicated, sustained funding to our nation's freight network.

In addition, I would like to highlight an important trade policy priority for the committee to consider.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 1376, the Cambodia Trade Act, bipartisan and bicameral legislation to require a review Cambodia's preferential trade status under the Generalized System of Preferences. Cambodia currently benefits from tariff exemptions or reductions under GSP, but substantial evidence suggests that the country has not fulfilled its obligations under this program.

The thirty-four-year regime of Prime Minister Hun Sen has been accused of serious labor and human rights violations, as well as actions to undermine the nation's path toward democracy by attempts to abolish any political opposition or dissent. In addition, I have heard from American business owners who have experienced significant interference while conducting business in Cambodia.

In February of this year, the European Union initiated a process to suspend its preferential trading arrangements with Cambodia, known as Everything But Arms. The European Commission concluded that "there is evidence of serious and systematic violations of core human rights and labor rights in Cambodia, in particular the rights to political participation as well as of the freedoms of assembly, expression and association. These findings add to the longstanding EU concerns about the lack of workers' rights and disputes linked to economic land concessions in the country."

These rights to political participation and expression are core to the ability of workers to organize and advocate for stronger protections and better wages.

I urge the committee to strongly consider this legislation or other means to use our trade relationship with Cambodia to address these human rights violations.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.