

**Representative Steve Chabot Testimony before the Highways and Transit Subcommittee
of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
April 5, 2011**

Thank you, Chairman Duncan and Ranking Member DeFazio, for the opportunity to testify today. Congressman Davis, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you and Congresswoman Schmidt as this Congress moves forward with a transportation bill.

Like Congressman Davis, I am also here to support the authorization of a program in the 2011 transportation bill to include projects of regional and national significance. We need to be pragmatic in our approach to this transportation bill, ensuring that every dollar spent represents a long-term investment that will improve the flow of commerce and create American jobs. We must recognize that, although we face significant budget challenges, the basic infrastructure of our nation must be a top priority.

In Cincinnati, we have a project of regional and national significance that I believe is the type of project Congress needs to consider while taking up the highway bill. The Brent Spence Bridge is not only critical to our local economy, but like Congressman Davis said, it is a major commercial artery connecting the Midwest with the South. The annual value of freight crossing the bridge exceeds \$400 billion – that's a little over 3% of our national GDP crossing one bridge! And by 2030 the value in real dollars is expected to more than double to \$800 billion.

The benefits of a project with that kind of freight value are tremendous. The Brent Spence Bridge project would save an estimated \$748 million in congestion costs annually, savings that would grow in real dollars to \$1.3 billion annually by 2030. A 2009 study done by the Texas Transportation Institute concluded that completing the Brent Spence Bridge project would save 2.9 million person-hours of delay, 210,000 vehicle-hours of delay, and 1.22 million gallons of fuel every year. Over the next 20 years, this would result in \$18.9 billion in benefits for commuters, shippers, and manufacturers.

The numbers are powerful on their own, but with freight serving as a key determinant of our economic competitiveness in the new global economy, projects like the Brent Spence Bridge carry even greater significance. With the price of oil at over \$100 a barrel and freight traffic scheduled to increase by 10% by 2030,

our ability to efficiently move goods within our nation's borders is critical to keeping the price of American goods low and competitive in the global marketplace.

It is no secret that our country faces serious economic challenges. Our national debt is out of control and that is due in large part to poor decisions and wasteful spending of taxpayers' money. Those of us in Congress are consequently forced to make tough choices on how to wisely invest in projects on their merits, not on their politics. We owe it to the American people to invest only

in those projects that will produce long-term savings, keep us competitive, and most importantly, create American jobs.

Like my friend and colleague Congressman Davis, I strongly urge you to ensure that the 2011 highway bill authorizes funding for projects of regional and national significance. Thank you for your time and consideration.