Remarks to the State of Vermont House and Senate Transportation Committees
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Thank you for having me.

I last appeared in front of this committee during my first year at The University of Vermont in 2007. At that time I had been hired to create a new Transportation Research Center using the USDOT UTC funding obtained in SAFETEA-LU by the Vermont Congressional delegation. In short, 3 years later, I can report the Center is going very well.

Our mission is to educate a new generation and to conduct research and data collection to build a better Vermont transportation system. We are leveraging the funds obtained by Senator Jeffords to attract new sources of research funding to Vermont. I measure our success in several ways:

- We employ 12 Vermonter as staff at the Center.
- We have attracted over $3.5M in new external grant funds to UVM – these above the earmark.
- Despite budget challenges at UVM, commitment to matching the UTC funding remains solid at $2.8M.
- We have funded 25-30 graduate students per year to study and work on transportation.
- We have new courses at UVM – over 60 students in transportation courses this semester.
- On an average year we host about 1,500 people at events, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- Last month we presented 17 studies at TRB – an international conference of 10,000 in Washington DC – one of these was about transportation funding challenges in a rural state.
- As UTC director I was asked to chair the upcoming USDOT/TRB national conference on transportation and livability – I credit our students and researchers for their non-traditional transportation research for this honor.
- We have strong partnerships with VTrans, CCMPO, regional planning commissions and other Vermont transportation stakeholders that are growing. These partners have guided us, funded us and now, as research results and data are made available, these groups are users of our results.
- We are pleased to host the VTrans state-wide travel demand model.
- A VTrans safety project is focusing on young drivers and distracted driving.
- We are pleased to start work this month with the comprehensive NHTS travel survey data – studying travel patterns of Vermonters.
- We are doing mapping analysis with E911 data on an optimal rural transit route system.
- Our research on seasonal changes in travel, biking and walking, tourist travel and land use modeling, including a carbon calculator, are nationally unique.

- We have built (with the College of Engineering) a nationally unique Transportation Air Quality Lab – I invite your committee to come for a tour, take a spin in a hybrid or conventional vehicle while we record your second-by-second tailpipe emissions. In the lab we are burning biodiesel, capturing pollutants and racing them over to the College of Medicine to research their health impacts.

- We are becoming the local, regional and national leaders in transportation workforce development. Just last week our own Karen Glitman delivered the keynote address at the AAC conference in FL. Our partnership with the State of Vermont Department of Corrections is particularly noteworthy.

You might be thinking: “She is only telling us the good news…what’s the catch?” Honestly, there are a few:

- We cannot be all things to all people in transportation – we have not been able to do projects on everything people request – we are focusing on sustainable transportation, not competing with established traditional centers in other states.

- With continuing resolutions in DC on the transportation bill we may be getting more UTC funding but it requires a 1:1 non-federal match – we are seeking eligible funds and documenting in-kind contributions like crazy – if you have studies we could deliver that would count as match we certainly want to discuss co-funding.

- We are concerned about the next transportation bill and how UTC funding will be included. We certainly want Vermont included.

- Finally, I think we share with you frustration at the relatively low level of attention paid to transportation. I would argue that mobility and access to work, jobs and services is critical to quality of life. Most Americans take transportation for granted: as a policy issue I believe it rates with education, health care and energy. Yet we struggle for adequate funding, attention and vision…for a different system that serves people better. After educating the next generation I believe the most important thing the Transportation Research Center can do is continue to collect data – data that measures things about the transportation system that can help get airtime with the public, with DC policy makers and policy makers here in Montpelier who do not sit on this committee and do not fully know how our complex transportation system needs comprehensive attention.