CAGTC Member Policinski Asks Congress to Increase Freight Infrastructure Funding

OKI’s CEO Says Freight Investment is Key for U.S. Economic Success

WASHINGTON, DC (December 20, 2017) – Testifying before the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) CEO Mark Policinski called on Congress to implement a strategic campaign of investment in our nation’s freight infrastructure. Noting that the current world economy demands that nations elevate their infrastructure to compete on the global stage, Mr. Policinski asked Congress to not only provide oversight for existing investment programs, but to also increase direct federal investment in our freight network.

Mr. Policinski represented both OKI and the Coalition for America’s Gateways & Trade Corridors (the Coalition) at today’s hearing. Commending the Subcommittee on their prioritization of freight in the FAST Act, Policinski encouraged Congress to continue their oversight of the Act’s freight provisions to ensure they are implemented in accordance with Congressional intent. He noted that competitive grants, like the INFRA program, have a proven ability to attract non-Federal dollars to fund projects, but projects should first be evaluated on their ability to meet the program’s goals, based on objective, merit-based criteria defined by Congress. Investment in the U.S. multimodal freight system results in public benefits and therefore cannot be considered a business proposition alone.

“For years, OKI’s motto has been ‘Freight is the Future,’” said Policinski. “The OKI region is home to the Brent Spence Bridge, one of the premier freight infrastructure projects in the country. It is a linchpin to the I-75 trade corridor connecting Michigan to Miami and the bridge carries over a billion dollars of goods daily. Originally built to handle 80,000 vehicles per day, the bridge now carries double that number, and its congestion and structural deficiencies cost the economy $750 million annually. The Brent Spence Bridge is illustrative of freight system inefficiencies across the nation – improvements are necessary to meet the growing demands of our economy.”

Recognizing that freight does not move on highways alone, Policinski asked Congress to recognize that any investment program must ensure that public agencies can invest in their most critical goods movement needs – regardless of mode. The efficient movement of goods across modes not only benefits companies transporting goods but also communities and customers.

“I commend the Committee and its leadership for their continued devotion to improving freight infrastructure. The FAST Act made significant strides in prioritizing investment in our multimodal goods movement network, but requests for funding demonstrate that much more is needed,” said CAGTC Executive Director Elaine Nessle. According to USDOT, $13 of funding was requested for every $1 available through the FY16 INFRA grant program. “Our international trading partners are outpacing our investments at a rapid clip – increased funding dedicated to freight infrastructure is necessary in order for the U.S. to remain competitive in the world marketplace.”

###

About the Coalition

The Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) is a diverse coalition of more than 60 public and private organizations dedicated to increasing federal investment in America’s intermodal freight infrastructure. In contrast to single mode interests, CAGTC’s main mission is to promote a seamless goods movement transportation system across all modes to enhance capacity and economic growth. For more information on the Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors, please visit [www.tradecorridors.org](http://www.tradecorridors.org).