Madame Chairwoman, thank you for calling this hearing today. Our passenger rail and freight rail infrastructure needs have received increasing attention over the last few months, through the high speed rail initiative, and as we push for clean transportation alternatives for people and goods.

As the country looks to rail transportation to address a variety of challenges such as capacity, congestion, air quality, and safety, we must also understand the crucial investments needed in railroad infrastructure. If the proper investments are not made, the many benefits that rail transportation offers will be lost.

I thank the Chairwoman for giving us all the opportunity to discuss one important tool we have in meeting the growing demands for rail infrastructure, the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program.

I look forward to hearing the witnesses' experiences and recommendations regarding this program.