

**Opening Statement**  
**The Honorable Adrian Smith (R-NE), Ranking Member**  
Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation  
Committee on Science and Technology  
*The Research and Development Portfolio Required to Support the Priorities of the Department  
of Transportation*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing this morning to examine the R&D portfolio and policy priorities of the Department of Transportation.

As committee action on DOT R&D legislation has been pushed back due to delays in progress on the overall highway bill, this hearing presents a good opportunity to examine DOT R&D priorities in advance of full committee consideration of reauthorization.

This hearing is intended to focus specifically on the R&D needed to support department-wide goals of safety, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and community livability. In order to do this, I believe it's important that we also examine the goals themselves to understand their purpose and meaning and evaluate whether they are appropriate for guiding future R&D activities.

To this end, I am particularly concerned with the appropriateness of the administration's "community livability" goal. At a minimum, it represents an amorphous concept difficult to define and measure progress toward. More troubling, however, key aspects of the livability agenda appear to involve significant Federal government intrusion into the manner in which Americans to travel and live.

Secretary LaHood has summarized this succinctly, characterizing the administration's livability initiative as "a way to coerce people out of their cars." While the candor is refreshing, needless to say I find this statement troubling.

The automobile is central to our identity and quality of life. Almost 95 percent of Americans get around by cars, and in districts such as mine in rural Nebraska I'm sure this figure is closer to 100 percent. Even in urban areas, Americans have demonstrated a great willingness to accept heavy traffic congestion and long commutes in exchange for the opportunity to live in a larger home with a yard, in a neighborhood with good schools and low crime.

In this sense, it seems the Administration's vision of a "livable community" is quite different from that of average Americans.

While these policy concerns tend to go beyond the committee's jurisdiction, they are important and relevant because the Department's R&D agenda will be shaped and driven by the DOT-wide strategic goals. Accordingly, I hope we can exercise close scrutiny of these goals as we consider further changes to DOT R&D legislation at the full committee level.

I thank the panelists for being here, and I look forward to a productive discussion.