June 3, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Commerce, Science, and
Transportation Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Commerce, Science, and
Transportation Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

In anticipation of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's hearing today entitled "The State of Transportation and Critical Infrastructure: Examining the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic," the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) writes to emphasize that in this unprecedented time, transportation technologies that address congestion, safety, and touchless transportation are being deployed in new and unforeseen ways to slow the spread of COVID-19, reinforce logistics and supply chains, and improve system performance as the American economy begins to reopen. As a result, ITS America supports policies in the reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and a potential infrastructure bill that significantly increase investments in research, development, and deployment of technologies to make our transportation system safer and more resilient.

We also know that more assistance is urgently needed to ensure that state, city, and county departments of transportation, transit agencies, and public tolling authorities can keep the nation's transportation systems moving safely, especially as the country begins to reopen from the coronavirus pandemic without a vaccine but with a focus on protecting public health. With that in mind, we urge Congress and the Administration to provide flexible funding to offset the revenue losses at state and local departments of transportation, transit agencies, and public tolling authorities. State and local governments also require flexible federal funding to deploy lifesaving technologies that better protect pedestrians and cyclists and accelerate the deployment of biking, scootering, and walking infrastructure as communities pedestrianize streets to make it easier for people to get around while socially distancing.

We know that we cannot simply return to the transportation priorities that preceded the pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted every sector of the transportation industry. The ability of states and cities to revive their battered economies will depend on a safe transportation system. With this in mind, we urge Congress to provide states, cities, counties, transit agencies, and public authorities flexibility with federal funds to deploy technology to stop the spread of COVID-19, including funding for contactless payment systems and technologies that protect transit workers and passengers and Mobility on Demand services and programs such as micromobility, ridesourcing, and microtransit to connect vulnerable communities to health care and work. States and local governments have seen reductions in greenhouse gases during the stay at home orders, which will result in better health and environmental outcomes. ITS America urges Congress and the Administration to help states and local governments maintain lower

greenhouse gases by providing investments to support vehicle electrification, including vehicle infrastructure, e-cargo cycling, and micromobility.

The following are a few examples of how our members are deploying safety, congestion mitigation, and touchless transportation technology as the country moves from the public health emergency to the reopening of the nation's economy.

## Safety Technologies

The **Port Authority of New York and New Jersey** hopes to pilot a technology originally designed for reducing Hospital Acquired Infections. Using ultraviolet light, the device creates hydrogen peroxide out of the surrounding air, which then seeks and destroys microbes in the air and on surfaces. The technology developers claim a 99.96% kill rate. It is an equipment-only solution (no chemicals required), so it is appealing from an ease-of-use perspective.

**Cubic GRIDSMART** can perform unique, advanced functionality to protect vulnerable road users, including bicyclists and pedestrians. GRIDSMART's enhanced features can detect bicyclists in the middle of intersections as well as pedestrians in crosswalks. This detection capability can be used to retime traffic signals "on the fly" to minimize conflicts with vulnerable users and allow extended clearance intervals for these users to exit intersections.

**PrePass Safety Alliance's** weigh station bypass and electronic tolling systems allow trucks delivering essential supplies to safely bypass inspection, weigh station, and toll facilities at highway speeds. PrePass technology helps keep drivers and toll facility and state agency personnel safe by reducing the need for person-to-person interaction. Qualified carriers equipped with PrePass RFID transponders or cellular connected devices are precleared for bypass and toll payments are processed electronically, keeping trucks on the road and on time. PrePass driver safety ALERTS™ also keep drivers informed of rest area closures, helping them find a safe place to rest during extended driving hours.

**BLYNCSY** traffic sensor technology has been adapted to provide contact tracing at universities and government buildings with the ability to cover 98 percent of people in those facilities and can be operational within a week.

## Congestion Mitigation Technologies

The **Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada** is using predictive analytics to improve safety and efficiency on freeways, including key freight corridors and major arterials, by compiling and analyzing data to report in real-time the location of accidents and predict where dangerous driving conditions or congestion may occur. This technology enables faster validation and response to roadway incidents as well as more efficient use of resources to proactively deploy traffic patrols and abatement efforts with the goal of preventing incidents. Using historic and real-time data from freeway sensors, connected vehicles, and other sources,

predictive analytics helps anticipate where congestion hot spots are likely to occur up to two hours in advance. More importantly, a tangential benefit has been RTC's ability to recognize and respond to incidents up to 12 minutes faster than before.

**Iteris** is helping states and cities monitor speed, volume, delay, and congestion experienced by travelers of all modes as they navigate the impacts of the pandemic on mobility and safety on roadways. ClearGuide™ helps make the best traffic operations and planning decisions in an intuitive and easy-to-use interface. The technology analyzes large amounts of complex transportation data to produce real-time and historical visualizations that help identify problem areas before traffic congestion worsens.

**Cubic Transportation Systems'** SynchroGreen is an adaptive signal control component of Trafficware's ATMS platform, a field-proven software solution that reduces motorist travel time, delays, and stops. Used in states like Texas and Florida, this technology continuously assesses both current and predictive traffic trends for all phases of intersection movements within a traffic network, determining the optimal signal settings. It allocates time for each vehicle and pedestrian phase in real time as well as accommodates roadway incidents and events on-the-fly, adjusting signal timing as necessary to restore smooth traffic flows.

## Touchless Technologies

Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and in an effort to keep the **Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)** Transportation Operations Center (TOC) staff and public safe, two of MDOT's largest TOC's - the Statewide TOC (STOC) in Lansing and the Southeast Michigan TOC (SEMTOC) in Detroit - moved to a virtual setup, with decisions being made and implemented within 48 hours at the beginning of April and the end of March, respectively. While there were early challenges, MDOT was able to maintain all TOC service with little to no impact because much of the planning for transitioning to virtual TOC's was done well in advance of the pandemic. MDOT's ATMS system, which allows MDOT to run all of its TOC's and ITS devices, is web-based and allows users to remotely login into the state's network though a VPN. This allows TOC's to be flexible by assisting one another during peak traffic periods or allows TOC's to temporarily relocate due to unforeseen events. In addition, MDOT has been testing laptops for operational purposes to replace aging desktops and allow for more mobile operations, which gives both TOC's enough computers for each operator. MDOT also has a large supply of Freeway Courtesy Patrol Radios, which equips each operator with his/her own radio in the field and saves time. Communication among TOC staff was a primary concern early on, but the use of Microsoft Teams quickly mitigated these concerns.

While the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation does not have jurisdiction of transit programs, we want to highlight two examples of how ITS America members are using touchless technology to protect both riders and employees.

The **Central Ohio Transit Authority** (COTA) is and will be implementing a wide range of technologies to protect its riders and employees. These technologies include a contactless payment system, driver safety barriers, employee temperature screening, state-of-the-art disinfecting techniques, and new on-demand routing schemes. COTA will continue to explore other emerging technologies that support safe and secure transit.

In May 2019, **Uber** launched its first mobile ticketing collaboration with Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD) and expanded in January 2020 to Las Vegas' Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). With the tap of a few buttons, transit riders in these two cities can plan end-to-end journeys and pay for their bus or train ride in the Uber app on their mobile device. This technology allows riders to quickly purchase fares without needing to handle cash, have exact change, or use a separate fare vending machine, which results in a more seamless and convenient transit ride with zero public touch points.

As the trade association representing stakeholders across the transportation sector, including state, city, and county departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, automotive manufacturers and suppliers, technology companies, engineering firms, and research universities, ITS America expresses our strong support for the actions taken by Congress and the Administration to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on the American economy, the transportation system, the traveling public, and transportation workers, and their families.

Sincerely,

Shailen Bhatt
President and CEO
The Intelligent Transportation Society of America

cc:
The Honorable Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)
The Honorable Roy Blunt (R-MO)
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
The Honorable Deb Fischer (R-NE)
The Honorable Cory Gardner (R-CO)
The Honorable Ron Johnson (R-WI)
The Honorable Mike Lee (R-UT)
The Honorable Jerry Moran (R-KS)
The Honorable Rick Scott (R-FL)
The Honorable Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
The Honorable John Thune (R-SD)
The Honorable Todd Young (R-IN)
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
The Honorable Ed Markey (D-MA)
The Honorable Gary Peters (D-MI)
The Honorable Jacky Rosen (D-NV)
The Honorable Brian Schatz (D-HI)
The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
The Honorable Jon Tester (D-MT)
The Honorable Tom Udall (D-NM)
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