

Statement of Jeffrey A. Rosen
Nominee for Deputy Secretary – Department of Transportation
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
March 29, 2017
2:30 p.m.

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If I am confirmed, I will look forward to working with all of you to advance the important work of the Department of Transportation.

I also want to thank Senator Portman for his very kind introduction. I was honored to serve with him at OMB when he was the Director there. I sincerely appreciate his taking time to be here today.

I am also pleased to introduce my wife, Dr. Kathleen Rosen, who is here with me today. Unfortunately, our three adult children, who live in Colorado and New York, are not able to be here to cheer on their old dad.

Let me begin by saying that I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Chao for showing their confidence in my ability to serve in this key position, particularly at a time when transportation and infrastructure are so vital to our country. During the 35 years of my career to date, I have had a number of experiences which, if I am confirmed, may prove useful to the role I would play at DOT. One is that I previously served as General Counsel at DOT, where I was fortunate to work with Secretary Norman Mineta on a wide range of transportation issues, and I also served as General Counsel and Senior Policy Advisor at OMB, as you heard from Senator Portman. Additionally, I have spent 30 years in the private sector at the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, during which, in addition to my work as a litigator, I served in a variety of management roles, including several years on the firm's global management committee and as co-head of its Washington DC office. Finally, I will note that last year I served as the elected Chair of the American Bar Association's Section of Administrative Law, which has thousands of members nationwide, and for several years I have been a member of the Administrative Conference of the United States.

Now, as members of this Committee well know, transportation is a very broad subject. Today, I'd like to briefly touch on two points.

First, DOT is a regulatory agency, and the safety of our traveling public must continue to be its primary regulatory objective. At DOT the General Counsel has long been the chief regulatory policy officer, and when I served in that role, the Department issued a number of important safety regulations. Now—a decade later—we are seeing major technology innovations in transportation, driven by the private sector. For example, I drive a hybrid vehicle, which was an innovative technology when I bought it eight years ago, but it now seems ancient by comparison to the self-driving cars and trucks being developed today. Determining the role of governments with regard to new technologies like automated vehicles and drones will be complex but vital if Congress and the Executive Branch are to position the federal government as enabling innovation while also protecting the public's safety.

A second important topic I want to mention is the urgent focus on infrastructure, where the aging of our highways, bridges, airports, and air traffic control has become all too plain, but for which the solutions will require both creativity and flexibility. I am not yet at DOT, but in thinking about this topic, one of the things I came to appreciate from my prior public service was the importance of DOT officials having good communication and working relationships with the members of Congress, and I would certainly regard that as an important part of my job if I am confirmed to serve again at DOT.

I would like to end on something of a personal note, if I may: I come before this Committee as someone acutely aware of how fortunate I have been to this point in life. My parents were not college graduates, but they were smart and caring people who made sure I had the education and opportunity to become a lawyer. My wife had a similar experience, as her parents were not college graduates, but they are bright and wonderful people who helped her on her chosen path to becoming an emergency room physician. Having traveled this road heightened how much I appreciate our unique country, and makes me care deeply about its future. If I am confirmed, I see this nomination as an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to something that impacts the daily lives of *all* Americans.

Indeed, if I am confirmed, I would welcome the chance to work with all of you to help rebuild, refurbish and revitalize America's transportation system, to enable the mobility Americans need, so that our economy can continue to grow, and enhance the quality of life for all Americans. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today.