

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION:
QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

NOMINATIONS HEARING JANUARY 21, 2021

Questions from Chairman Wicker to Peter Buttigieg

Regulatory Barriers

Question 1. In order to keep pace with a growing economy, we must continue to find ways to improve the safety and efficiency of our transportation system. Unfortunately, our outmoded regulatory framework can make it difficult to advance innovative technologies and deploy swift infrastructure improvements. For example, automated technologies have the ability to save lives and improve mobility. Additionally, as we rebuild our infrastructure, an improved permitting process could save both time and taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, how do you plan to improve the regulatory framework and remove barriers that impede upon the growth of our transportation system?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will look forward to working with Congress to create a safer, more efficient transportation system and am committed to carefully evaluating regulations and making regulatory decisions based on the best available data and science. I commit to ensuring that we make investments and implement programs that enable our transportation system to support economic growth and opportunity for all Americans.

Infrastructure Improvements

Question 2. As a former Mayor, did you find the use of advance refunds on tax-exempt municipal bonds helped improve infrastructure? Do you agree that providing additional financing tools for local governments, through authorizing a new class of taxable infrastructure bonds, would also be helpful to improving infrastructure across America?

Response: When I was mayor, we took advantage of the opportunity to create taxpayer savings through bond refunds, and I recognize how important this tool is to cities and major transit agencies. If I am confirmed as Secretary of Transportation, I commit to working with Congress to consider a variety of financing options and to leveraging the Department's resources to realize President Biden's vision for a transformational investment in American infrastructure; to make it safer, more equitable, more sustainable; and create millions of good-paying jobs. That includes using the funding and financing resources of the Department to work with state, local, and other partners and consider other innovative solutions that may be proposed by Congress.

Connected infrastructure and data

Question 3. Across the world, countries have found ways to harness data and adopt innovation into their transportation systems to better connect people to jobs, education, and health care. Our transportation network is evolving with increased data availability and innovative technologies that are being developed. If confirmed as Secretary, how would you integrate data and technology to improve safety and mobility in our transportation system? Given your background

as Mayor, are there any initiatives with respect to data collection and integration that you intend to undertake to help rural communities?

Response: Connected infrastructure and access to innovation has the potential to create a transportation system that better serves all communities. As Mayor, I prioritized South Bend's evolution to a "Beta City," a national model for innovative practices where we can "Beta Test" new ideas and approaches. This included creating a Department of Innovation, establishing an open data policy for the City, and building on a "Smart Sewers" system to divert excess stormwater and save money on potential sewer upgrade projects. If confirmed, I am eager to work with you and rural communities to determine where they can use new measurement tools and data analysis techniques to save taxpayer dollars and improve quality of life, as my administration did in South Bend.

DOT Modes

Question 4. DOT oversees a number of modal administrations – what are your top priorities for each mode?

Response: President Biden has been clear that we must Build Back Better. He has laid out the four simultaneous crises that we are facing as a nation that each mode within the Department will have a role in addressing: COVID-19, economic recovery, racial inequity, and climate change. These challenges are daunting and multi-faceted, and if I am confirmed, will be priorities for me to address across all the modes of the Department of Transportation. We also need to focus on our core mission of safety. This includes investing in our nation's transportation infrastructure to repair crumbling roads and bridges and ensuring our transit systems can continue to meet our mobility needs. We must ensure our investments create a more sustainable, resilient economy that is on a path to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The challenge of crumbling roads and obsolete bridges has obviously long pre-dated the COVID crisis, as has the challenge of infrastructure funding. Investments in infrastructure are a force multiplier and generally the return on infrastructure investment is repaid to communities many times over.

Pipeline Safety

Question 5. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation worked on a bipartisan basis last Congress to provide new funding and technology programs within the PIPES Act of 2020, which reauthorized the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline safety program through fiscal year 2023. A key provision included in the PIPES Act of 2020 established a pilot program to test innovative safety technologies. If confirmed, will you commit to comprehensively implementing this important legislation, including such provisions? Additionally, what are your plans for PHMSA and for ensuring that Americans will continue to have safe and reliable energy infrastructure?

Response: My number one commitment at DOT will be safety. If confirmed, I will review PHMSA's efforts to issue regulations in response to Congressional mandates and ensure a safe and reliable energy infrastructure.

Autonomous Vehicles (AV)

Question 6. Automated vehicles have the potential to significantly reduce traffic fatalities, increase mobility for the elderly and disabled, and improve efficiency. The U.S. is currently a leader in developing this life-saving technology but other nations are advancing quickly. Many outmoded rules on our books may hamper the safe testing and deployment of this technology. What steps should the Department take to advance the safe testing and deployment of automated vehicles in the U.S. and to ensure that the benefits of this technology – and the jobs and innovation associated with it – are realized here?

Response: We know that autonomous vehicles are part of the future of this nation's transportation infrastructure. Autonomous vehicles can make our transportation system safer and more efficient. If confirmed, I am eager to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure that the Federal government is leading the way on ensuring safe autonomous vehicle operations nationwide, and I would work with industry, American workers, safety organizations, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to determine how to create American jobs and advance American technological leadership through this industry.

Gulf Coast

Question 7. Are you committed to working to restore Amtrak service to the Gulf Coast?

Response: I am committed to improving passenger rail and understand the importance of making sure our infrastructure projects are resilient to extreme weather events like Hurricane Katrina. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this project and discussing it with you, and working with you and your Congressional colleagues to establish predictable, dedicated funding sources for Amtrak maintenance and expansion.

Trucking

Question 8. The Electronic Logging Device (ELD) rule required commercial drivers to record their hours-of-service (HOS) electronically rather than on paper. Since in effect, it has become more evident that the existing HOS regulations may not be appropriate for certain types of trucking operations, such as agricultural commodity and livestock haulers. With that in mind, do you commit to taking a comprehensive look at requirements with the aim of providing appropriate relief and flexibility for drivers as you work to advance the safe and efficient transportation of goods?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to taking a hard look at the Hours of Service regulations and how such regulations intersect with the varied complexities of truckers' daily work, including those who transport time-sensitive cargo such as livestock and agricultural commodities.

COVID Relief

Question 9. Surface transportation sectors, such as buses, rental cars, airport parking, are struggling in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I sent letters to several freight and passenger transportation trade associations on the steps they are taking in response to the pandemic. Would you commit to hear the concerns and work with these industries as they respond and recover from COVID-19 impacts?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to hearing the concerns of industry stakeholders, workers, state governors, and local officials so that we can work together to contain the pandemic, protect the transportation industry, and keep employees and passengers safe.

COVID Relief

Question 10. The recently enacted COVID relief package included flexibilities for states to implement the highway traffic safety grants at NHTSA and the motor carrier safety grants at FMCSA. Will you commit to working with the Committee to ensure states have the flexibilities needed to respond to the pandemic?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to working with the Committee to provide communities with the flexibility and support they need, especially during these difficult times facing the COVID-19 crisis.

Approach to Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement

Question 11. The aviation sector is heavily regulated at many levels. In recent years, the Department and the FAA have taken similar approaches to their respective jobs in terms of how to ensure that regulated entities adhere to the rules. At FAA, there is the Compliance Program, wherein the agency focuses on fostering compliance with regulations rather than immediately punishing violations. The Office of Aviation Consumer Protection often does the same for many cases of violations.

Can you please explain how, if confirmed, DOT under your leadership would approach working with industry participants on compliance with the regulations versus enforcement of the regulations?

Response: A core mission of DOT is to ensure the safety of the traveling public by setting standards and enforcing them faithfully. With regards to aviation, a compliance program focused on transparency and a collaborative exchange of information ensures that underlying safety issues are brought to light. If there are concerns with regards to safety, FAA should encourage disclosure so that appropriate remedial and corrective actions are quickly taken. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with the FAA in reviewing and implementing the recently enacted bipartisan Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act, which includes key whistleblower protections, so that those who report any violations in the certification process are indeed protected.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) NextGen Program

Question 12. If confirmed, how will you ensure that our national airspace realizes tangible, material and real operational progress from the FAA's NextGen program in order to achieve the long-promised safety, efficiency and emissions benefits of modernization?

Response: If confirmed, I will ensure that the FAA operationalizes NextGen technology as quickly and safely as we possibly can and ensures that aircraft are equipped and suited for NextGen. I will also work with Congress to ensure that the FAA has the resources necessary to complete deployment of NextGen.

Safety Data

Question 13. Aviation Safety continues to be an important focus for this Committee, particularly with the enactment of the Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act late last year. I am encouraged to hear Administrator Dickson speak to the importance of big data and analytics in order to ensure that the FAA has the right information during the aviation safety oversight process. What are your views on the benefits of using data analytics tools to achieve our safety objectives?

Response: We have seen in the past few years the importance of safety information, particularly in oversight of our aircraft manufacturing process, and especially in light of the tragic crashes of the Boeing 737 MAX over Indonesia in 2018 and Ethiopia in 2019 that took the lives of 346 people. The use of data through analytics is a fundamental way to identify safety problems, carry out DOT's safety responsibilities, and measure the effectiveness of solutions. If confirmed, I will support the FAA as the agency continues to enhance its ability to use safety data, and will encourage the aviation industry to do the same. For example, the bipartisan Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act directs FAA to implement a rulemaking requiring that all aviation manufacturers adopt safety management systems that we hope will allow for safer design and production of aircraft and prevent future tragedies. Given the consequences of failure, FAA needs to move deliberately and the relationship between regulator and industry needs to protect the public every time. For FAA to continue to advance its mission of aviation safety, all available data and methods of analysis are essential in helping to identify safety problems and measure the effectiveness of solutions.

Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE)

Question 14. The FAA's Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence, known as ASSURE is a Center of Excellence, comprised of 24 renowned research institutions, including Mississippi State University, which conducts important research on integrating UAS into the National Airspace. Will you familiarize yourself with ASSURE as you get up to speed on UAS issues?

Response: Yes, I look forward to learning more about it.

FAA National Airspace System Commercial Space Integration

Question 15. The number and frequency of space launches and re-entries from U.S. spaceports has increased dramatically. As this trend continues, integrating these launches into the national airspace system will be critical to maintaining safety and maximizing airspace use. The FAA is working on tools such as the Space Data Integrator and Hazard Risk Assessment and Mitigation framework. Can you commit to ensuring that this important work continues?

Response: I am committed to working with FAA and industry to ensure safe operations in our national airspace system, should I be confirmed. I look forward to further exploring these tools and determining how they can play a key role in improving safety.

FAA Commercial Space Licensing

Question 16. Last year, the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation issued a final rule to streamline space launch and reentry licensing. What steps would you take to ensure our

nation's commercial space launch and reentry licensing structure is best positioned to be the world leader in promoting transparency, sustainability, and fostering innovation and growth?

Response: If confirmed, I am looking forward to working with the FAA and our private spaceflight operators to help build this remarkable new industry in the United States. I know there are several states, including some represented by Senators on this panel, who have taken a leading role in creating spaceports. I will work with Congress to find ways to improve, and, where necessary, expand existing space transportation infrastructure consistent with safe operations.

Question 17. Will you will work with industry to ensure optimal outcomes for the safety and growth of America's space enterprise?

Response: If confirmed, I am very interested in working with all stakeholders, including industry stakeholders, to make informed decisions on the safety and growth of America's space enterprise.

Question 18. The Office of Commercial Space Transportation is a small office within FAA with roughly 120 employees. Given the significant work ahead to implement the new launch and reentry rule, do you believe that it would be prudent to prioritize resources for these immediate implementation activities?

Response: If confirmed, I am interested in engaging with the Office of Commercial Space Transportation and I look forward to working with you to help promote safety, continue the innovation being shown by American companies, creating rewarding jobs here in the United States.

Space Infrastructure

Question 19. The broad and deep improvement in U.S. space transportation rests upon historical federal and ongoing state, local, and private investments in infrastructure. There are 12 licensed launch and reentry sites around the country. As space launch and reentry activity grows, site capacity will need to grow proportionally. Do you see space transportation as an important albeit emerging mode of transportation, and will space infrastructure be part of the Biden-Harris infrastructure investment plan?

Response: I am enthusiastic about the potential of space transportation to improve our aviation system and create more transportation options. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the FAA and private spaceflight operators to help build this incredible new industry in the United States and create more jobs for the American people in the process.

Commercial Human Spaceflight Safety/ Learning Period

Question 20. In the last week, we've had two successful launches by two American companies with ambitions to fly paying spaceflight participants to Low Earth Orbit. As these companies work to establish a flight record and build consensus about safety standards and practices, Congress has deemed it prudent to implement a "learning period" or "moratorium" on common-carrier-type participant safety regulations.

What are your views on the current state of commercial human spaceflight activities with respect to safety?

Response: I am encouraged by the recent successes of this exciting new industry, and ensuring their continued safe operations is essential. I look forward to learning more about these companies and the opportunities they represent in the coming months, if confirmed. As with all modes of transportation, safety will be my top priority when evaluating initiatives that concern commercial human spaceflight.

Question 21. As the learning period is currently set to expire in 2023, will you commit to working with us in Congress to evaluate the best path forward to maintain safety as well as foster the growth of this emerging industry?

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on these issues.

Maritime Administration (MARAD) – COVID-19 Vaccination of U.S. Merchant Mariners

Question 22. America's merchant mariners are an essential workforce with a key role in national security and the national supply chain. If confirmed, will you commit to direct the Maritime Administration and the Department of Transportation to work with your interagency partners to promote the expedient vaccination of U.S. mariners and other front-line maritime transportation workers?

Response: If confirmed, I will ensure that DOT takes all measures necessary to ensure the timely, efficient, and safe transport and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, in coordination with other relevant agencies. This will help effectuate CDC's recommendation to support critical infrastructure workers, like those in the maritime industry.

Strategic Sealift Recapitalization

Question 23. Do you believe that strategic sealift recapitalization is a national security priority in which the Secretary of Transportation plays an important role?

Response: Yes, recapitalization of our strategic sealift capacity is a national security priority. If confirmed, I will support DOT's continued active support of the Department of Defense requirements by providing a reserve fleet of sealift ships from those owned by the Department and maintained by MARAD.

Question 24. If so, what opportunities do you see recapitalization presenting for the domestic maritime industrial base?

Response: If I am confirmed, I would assess the opportunities for the domestic industrial base, including service life extension, used ship acquisition, and some new construction.

Tanker Security Program

Question 25. Within the Department of Transportation, the Maritime Administration serves an important national security role by supporting U.S.-flagged ships for strategic sealift. The National Defense Act for Fiscal Year 2021 authorized a Tanker Security Program to support

strategic sealift, so that the U.S. military is not forced to rely on foreign- flagged vessels for fuel logistics during national emergencies.

Will you commit to standing up the Tanker Security Program in a timely manner so that our U.S. troops can rely on fuel from U.S.-flagged vessels?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to learning more about the goals of the Tanker Security Program, consistent with our authority and available resources.

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Recapitalization

Question 26. The U.S. is significantly short of the mariners needed for sustained strategic sealift in a national emergency. A prime source for training of these mariners is the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. However, the Academy desperately needs improvements to its campus to meet the training needs of a 21st century merchant marine.

Will you commit to making the recapitalization and modernization of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy a priority?

Response: Congress and the Department of Transportation have been strong supporters of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy recapitalization efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this important work.

Questions from Senator Thune

Question 1. The nation's trucking industry is the backbone of our economy, and I have advocated for a regulatory framework that provides the flexibility truckers need to safely deliver goods across the country, which is why I was pleased by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's publication of a final rule in June 2020 to increase hours of service flexibility. I will continue to advocate for increased flexibility for agricultural and livestock haulers, who face unique circumstances associated with the goods they transport.

- a. Do you believe it is important to recognize the essential service that truckers continue to provide – especially during this pandemic – by listening to their concerns about current regulations?

Response: We need to ensure that truck drivers operate under conditions that guarantee their safety and the safety of everyone on our roadways. I am eager to engage truckers and better understand their concerns, if I am confirmed as Secretary.

- b. Can you describe how – if confirmed – you would build on the past Administration's work to improve the livelihoods of truckers – including those hauling livestock and agricultural commodities – through changes to the current regulatory framework?

Response: If confirmed, I will take a hard look at the Hours of Service regulations and how they intersect with the varied complexities of truckers' daily work, including those who transport time-sensitive cargo such as livestock and agricultural commodities.

Question 2. I remain committed to working with my colleagues to introduce and advance automated vehicle legislation this Congress, and I have been pleased to see NHTSA's recent actions to improve the testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles through the granting of exemption petitions and updates to relevant regulations.

If confirmed, will modernizing motor vehicle safety standards and working with Congress to create a uniform regulatory framework for automated vehicles be a priority for the Administration?

Response: We know that autonomous vehicles are part of the future of this nation's transportation infrastructure. Autonomous vehicles can make our transportation system safer and more efficient. If confirmed, I am eager to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure that the Federal government is leading the way on ensuring safe autonomous vehicle operations nationwide, and I would work with industry, American workers, safety organizations, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to determine how to create American jobs and advance American technological leadership through this industry.

Question 3. Over 95 percent of rail-related deaths in the United States involve drivers going through a grade crossing or a person walking on or along the tracks. Sadly, nearly all of these deaths are preventable. The Section 130 Railway-Highway Crossings Program and other grant

programs at the Department have provided funding to state and local governments for grade crossing improvement and separation projects.

As Secretary, would you commit to advocating for increased funding and needed programmatic flexibilities for grade crossing projects in order to meet the significant, widespread demand for these vital safety and highway mobility improvement projects?

Response: Safety is the top priority for the Department of Transportation and I will pursue a comprehensive strategy to reduce and eliminate deaths on our transportation system. These tragic incidents that result from conflicts between rail and other modes of travel are unacceptable and preventable. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to identify additional resources that will promote multimodal safety and improve safety for all who travel.

Question 4. Understanding that you will have a host of pressing issues should you be confirmed as the next Secretary of Transportation, one issue that I believe warrants your attention is the potential for cybersecurity vulnerabilities in motor vehicles. A few of my colleagues sent a letter to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration last November regarding this issue, and remain interested in a response.

If confirmed, can you ensure that we receive an official response from the agency in an expeditious manner?

Response: Yes, this is a critical issue and, should I be confirmed, I will make sure you receive a response.

Questions from Senator Blunt

Question 1. As Congress debates the next surface transportation authorization bill, inevitably there will be a conversation on proposals for new financing tools. Those tools can be very helpful for certain projects, but it most likely cannot replace all direct federal funding.

What financing proposals are the Biden Administration considering, and what funding sources should be utilized to ensure that they could be successful?

Response: If I am confirmed as Secretary of Transportation, I am committed to using the Department's resources to realize President Biden's vision for a transformational investment in American infrastructure, to make it safer, more equitable, more sustainable, and create millions of good-paying jobs. That includes leveraging the considerable funding and financing resources of the Department to work with Congressional, state, local, and other partners to help build compelling projects that achieve these goals. The Department of Transportation is committed to making the funding and financing pipeline for transportation projects as streamlined and transparent as possible.

Question 2. Mr. Buttigieg, one of the last things approved by the Obama administration before leaving office was a foreign air carrier permit for a European airline that used a "flag of convenience" business model to gain a competitive advantage over U.S. airlines. This application was opposed by Airline management as well as Airline labor because this business model violates specific terms of the U.S.-EU Open Skies agreement, namely Article 17. As Secretary of Transportation, would you strongly support and enforce our trade agreements as written and not allow them to be misinterpreted to the detriment of our own airlines?

Response: The aviation industry is critical to American competitiveness. We need to ensure that U.S. airlines have a fair and level playing field from which to operate and do not experience competitive disadvantages. If confirmed, I will support and enforce aviation trade agreements and policies that advance the interests of the American public, American businesses, and American workers.

Question 3. The COVID Relief and Response Act provided \$2 billion in funding for grants for the motorcoach, school bus and U.S. flagged passenger vessel industries which is to be administered by the Department of Treasury in consultation with the Department of Transportation. Guidance has not yet been released for this program and we have been informed it could be several weeks before it is up and running. Can you commit to making this new program a priority by reaching out to the Treasury Department directly to determine what measures are necessary to ensure this funding gets out the door as soon as possible?

Response: Yes, absolutely. I look forward to working with Treasury to ensure that this helps our essential industries as soon as possible.

Question 4. Mayor Buttigieg, as a former Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, you have an intimate knowledge of infrastructure planning and the positive impacts infrastructure investment has on your community and local economy. 2021 will be a big year for infrastructure policy as the FAST Act expires at the end of the fiscal year, the Highway Trust Fund is on the brink of

insolvency, and President Biden has signaled his desire to utilize infrastructure investment to jump start our economy as we continue to deal with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a long supporter of highway investment and its role in Missouri's economy, I understand the great impacts such federal investment can achieve and will be working closely with my colleagues to deliver a robust authorization bill that advances infrastructure investment for years to come. If confirmed, can you share with the Committee your detailed proposal for a highway reauthorization? And how do you see the Department of Transportation supporting these efforts and continuing healthy investment into our over-utilized but underfunded highway, road and bridge network?

Response: President Biden has been clear that we must Build Back Better. He has laid out the four simultaneous crises that we are facing as a nation that each mode within the Department will have a role in addressing: COVID-19, economic recovery, racial inequity, and climate change. These challenges are daunting and multi-faceted, and if I am confirmed, will be priorities for me to address across all the modes of the Department of Transportation. We also need to focus on our core mission of safety. This includes investing in our nation's transportation infrastructure to repair crumbling roads and bridges and ensuring that our transit systems can continue to meet our mobility needs. We must ensure our investments create a more sustainable, resilient economy that is on a path to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The challenge of crumbling roads and obsolete bridges has obviously long pre-dated the COVID crisis, as has the challenge of infrastructure funding. Investments in infrastructure are a force multiplier and generally the return on infrastructure investment is repaid to communities many times over. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee and with the other key Committees to craft a multi-year reauthorization, including addressing our long-standing funding challenges.

Question 5. Mayor Buttigieg, while some often think of transit systems as being more urban in nature, the fact is that public transit is incredibly important to Americans in rural areas who depend on transit to get to work, school, supermarkets, medical appointments and other destinations. As a general rule, smaller systems are more reliant on federal funds as a percentage of capital budgets than larger systems. If confirmed, how will you support robust and reliable federal funding for transit operators in rural America?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will ensure that the DOT implements a balanced investment program that meets the needs of all communities, including rural communities. I understand that rural communities have unique needs. I also know that infrastructure investments in rural America are key to supporting economic growth and to ensuring that residents in rural communities are not isolated and can access both employment and essential basic services like health care. I look forward to working with you on additional support for transit agencies - both urban and rural - that are deeply impacted by COVID-19.

Question 6. High octane biofuels, such as mid-level ethanol blends, can maximize fuel efficiency and reduce emissions. As the Department of Transportation considers regulatory action to address climate change and reduce emissions, any action must incentivize and account for engine optimization for low-carbon, higher octane fuels. Last year, the Trump Administration's final fuel economy standards rule failed to account for a transition to low-carbon, high octane fuels. This was clearly a missed opportunity to drive the market for biofuels and reduce emissions. Mid-level ethanol blends are a technology available today that offer higher octane and can

immediately help auto manufacturers meet and comply with increasing fuel economy standards. As the Biden Administration and DOT consider strengthening fuel economy standards, what opportunities do you see for changes to the Federal program that would allow biofuels to be used to their full potential to provide octane for highly fuel efficient engines?

Response: The transportation sector has a key role to play in addressing climate change. As a first step, let me assure you that if I am confirmed, the DOT will again respect science and the federal scientists who are working on climate change issues. The Department will continue to support the advancement of clean fuel technologies. The Department will work with you and other external stakeholders in the clean fuel industry, including unions, industry, and local, state, and tribal governments to determine how to create new programs and use existing programs to create innovative solutions to climate change. The Department will also work closely with our partners in the government to provide regulatory certainty. American innovation will indeed be critical to combating climate change. We will make sure our regulatory actions are smart, forward-leaning, and recognize and enable innovation and effective new technologies.

Question 7. Mr. Buttigieg, on the campaign trail you expressed your support for biofuels, including support for higher ethanol blends like E-15. To realize these benefits, we need to ensure we have the infrastructure that can get these low-carbon fuels to consumers. Parity in clean energy technology and infrastructure investment is vital to ensuring that all low-carbon options are available to consumers regardless of income or geography. Distribution systems, pump infrastructure, and biofuel-dedicated pipelines are all needed to drive low-carbon transportation options. As Congress and the Biden Administration consider significant clean energy and infrastructure investment, including significant investments in charging infrastructure, will you ensure equally substantial action is taken to invest in biofuel infrastructure?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and my colleagues at the Department of Energy to learn more about the opportunities for biofuel distribution systems across the various modes of transportation.

Question 8. As we look at advancing an infrastructure proposal, it is imperative we understand where the resources to construct these projects are coming from. Stone, sand, and gravel are key materials needed to build infrastructure. They are imperative to expanding our highways construction, building new transit networks and in supporting development and delivery of new energy sources like wind power. I am concerned with the lack of sustainable aggregates resources in many communities across the nation and the impact this has on infrastructure investment and the environment. Eliminating access to these building materials leads to higher costs, increased congestion and emissions on our roads. As Secretary, what steps will you take to ensure a sustainable supply of aggregates is available to build our infrastructure?

Response: Access to aggregates and construction materials is critically important for the maintenance and development of our infrastructure system. There are a limited number of existing aggregate resource sites in our nation, and we need to take coordinated efforts to understand how to ensure the availability and reasonable price of these resources without compromising our commitments to safety or environmental protection. If confirmed, I look

forward to working with you, your colleagues, and other stakeholders to explore what actions can be taken to sustain our supply of aggregates.

Question 9. If confirmed, how would the Department of Transportation lay the foundation for the continued development of autonomous vehicle technology to ensure the future of this technology stays in the United States?

Response: We know that autonomous vehicles are part of the future of this nation's transportation infrastructure. Autonomous vehicles can make our transportation system safer and more efficient. If confirmed, I am eager to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure that the Federal government is leading the way on ensuring safe autonomous vehicle operations nationwide, and I would work with industry, American workers, safety organizations, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to determine how to create American jobs and advance American technological leadership through this industry.

Questions from Senator Fischer

Question 1. Currently, truck drivers between the ages of 18 and 21 can move freight in intrastate commerce, but not interstate commerce. In effect, a 19 year old can drive a truck the 450 miles from Scottsbluff to Omaha, but can't cross the border from Omaha to Council Bluffs. I included in the FAST Act a pilot program that requires FMCSA to examine the safety of certain military and veteran drivers between 18 and 21 to transport freight in interstate commerce. FMCSA started the pilot program in February 2020, and the program will go for three years. However, the program has faced driver recruitment challenges because of the pandemic. Will you ensure the success of this pilot program so we can examine the safety benefits of these drivers?

Response: Providing career pathways for our younger Americans is essential to building a stronger economy and stronger communities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and FMCSA on ways to increase opportunities within the trucking industry without compromising our safety standards.

Question 2. Last year, I was glad to work with Senator Duckworth and the chair and ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee on the bipartisan PIPES Act of 2020. This bill included many provisions that will enhance pipeline safety, ensure ways PHMSA has the well-trained staff and resources it needs, and examine state of the art safety technologies. If confirmed, will you ensure PHMSA expeditiously implements the provisions of the PIPES Act consistent with PHMSA's safety mission?

Response: My number one commitment at DOT will be safety. If confirmed, I will review PHMSA's efforts to issue regulations in response to Congressional mandates and ensure a safe and reliable energy infrastructure.

Questions from Senator Moran

Question 1. ELD Mandate

Kansas brings in thousands of head of feeder cattle from across the country each year to be grazed and finished. It is critical these cattle be safely and humanely transported. The Department's hours of service rules must not create unintended situations that would cause harm or death to these animals, such as requiring a livestock hauler to pull off the side of the road with a load of cattle or requiring the off-loading of the cattle mid-trip.

The electronic logging device mandate highlighted the overly restrictive hours of service rules for livestock haulers, and is an issue I have worked on as a member of the Appropriations Committee by supporting an exemption for livestock haulers from ELD's.

- Will you and your agency commit to working with me to address the underlying hours of service issue so livestock haulers are able to safely and humanely transport live animals?

Response: If confirmed, I will take a hard look at the Hours of Service regulations and how they intersect with the varied complexities of truckers' daily work, including those who transport time-sensitive cargo such as livestock and agricultural commodities.

Question 2. Long-distance Amtrak routes

Congress purposely created Amtrak's national network of long-distance service throughout the nation, in recognition of the importance of a transportation system that reaches every community, regardless of how rural it may be.

However, last October, Amtrak's long-distance trains were reduced from daily service in places like Kansas, to service 3-times per week. Amtrak has confirmed this change was in sole response to the COVID-19 pandemic and daily service will once again return.

- The Secretary of Transportation overserves the Federal Railroad Administration, which administers federal grants to Amtrak. If confirmed, what are your thoughts for supporting the National Network, and what are your plans for addressing the recent reductions in frequencies on long-distance routes?

Response: Moving over 32 million passengers a year (pre-COVID-19) on more than 300 Amtrak trains a day, Amtrak is a vital component to America's passenger transportation network, and should be at the heart of the renaissance of passenger rail transportation in the nation. Americans should expect a high standard for long distance passenger rail. Before COVID, Amtrak had turned a corner on its operational budget, and I look forward to working with Congress to establish predictable, dedicated funding sources for Amtrak maintenance and expansion, if confirmed. I will also prioritize examining how service cuts have impacted communities and exploring opportunities to help Amtrak return to financial stability and pre-pandemic service levels.

Question 3. Contract Towers

Today, more than 250 airports participate in the FAA's Contract Tower Program, including eight in Kansas. I have been a longtime advocate of this critical program, which enhances aviation safety at smaller airports around the country. Last Congress, I joined Senators Inhofe and Murray to introduce a bipartisan bill that would remove an unnecessary barrier in the hiring pipeline for controllers at contract tower airports.

- Will you commit to supporting the Contract Tower Program, and working with us as we aim to address the staffing challenges presented at contract towers?

Response: The most important thing to me, when it comes to air traffic control, will be the safety of our aviators, crews, and passengers. If confirmed, I assure you that any evaluation of air traffic operations will take the Contract Tower Program fully into account, including staffing challenges.

Question 4. Aviation Manufacturing

Aviation Manufacturing is an iconic industry, not only to Wichita, Kansas, the 'Air Capitol of the World' but to the entire nation. In 2019, the U.S. aerospace industry employed 2.2 million workers and accounted for 1.8% of total U.S. GDP. Unfortunately, aviation manufacturing has not been immune to the impact of COVID-19 as well as facing other challenges.

- Mr. Buttigieg, I know you have had a strong focus on manufacturing during your public life. As DOT Secretary, will you, in collaboration with the FAA Administrator, focus on ensuring U.S. aviation manufacturing has the support and resources needed to help it fully recover and retain its leadership role?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with the FAA to support domestic manufacturing in the aviation industry. I am eager to ensure that President Biden's Build Back Better approach positions U.S. aviation manufacturing for the future of flight, including such innovations as sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), electric aircraft, and new light-weighting and efficiency technologies.

Question 5. Advanced Air Mobility

Secretary Nominee, you have been quoted recently stressing the importance of planning for soon arriving technologies and their impact on transportation options, stating a "Jetsons future" is but three to seven years away.

I agree with the development of this evolving technology, and as you know, the FAA already has application to certify air vehicles. However, to really secure the opportunities of advanced air mobility and meet presenting challenges, the federal government with the U.S. Department of Transportation in a leadership role must move forward with planning and collaboration across government in infrastructure, investment and security, especially to meet the above timeline.

- If confirmed, how do you intend to facilitate the planning and collaboration to meet these technological advances? Will you commit to working with Congress to do so?

Response: The main focus of the FAA is safety, and if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to help the Department meet these goals with regards to innovations like Advanced Air Mobility. I look forward to examining further opportunities within a strong regulatory framework to ensure that the unmanned aircraft industry can both integrate safely into the National Aviation System (NAS) and efficiently develop new technologies.

Questions from Senator Sullivan

Question 1. Jobs:

- During your nomination hearing, when I asked you about your how you would respond to the men and women in the building trades following the President’s Executive Order on Keystone XL, you responded:

“I believe that the President's climate vision will create more jobs on net, and I think it's gonna be very important to work with him and work with Congress to make sure that we can deliver on that promise that, on net, more good-paying union jobs will be created in the context of the climate and infrastructure work that we have before us than has been impacted by other decisions.”

On January 20, 2021, following the announcement of the Executive Order on Keystone XL by President Biden, the Laborers’ International Union of North America released a statement, in which Terry O’Sullivan, General President, stated:

“The Biden Administration’s decision to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline permit on day one of his presidency is both insulting and disappointing to the thousands of hard-working LIUNA members who will lose good-paying, middle class family-supporting jobs. By blocking this 100 percent union project, and pandering to environmental extremists, a thousand union jobs will immediately vanish and 10,000 additional jobs will be foregone.

We had hoped the new Administration would make a decision based on the facts as they are today, not as they were perceived years ago. The Keystone XL pipeline of today is dramatically different than the pipeline rejected while President Biden was in the Obama Administration. In an agreement with North America’s Building Trades Unions, the project owner, TC Energy, had committed \$1.7 billion to operate the pipeline with renewable energy and achieve net-zero emission within two years – all using union workers. Their commitment amounted to the equivalent of taking 650,000 cars off the road, one of the largest renewable energy investments ever.

We support the President’s campaign to “build back better.” But for union members affected by this decision, there are no renewable energy jobs that come even close to replacing the wages and benefits the Keystone XL project would have provided. Killing good union jobs on day one with nothing to replace them, is not building back better. Hopefully, the Biden Administration will not continue to allow environmental extremists to control our country’s energy agenda at the expense of union construction workers being forced to the unemployment lines.”

- How do you address the comments made by Mr. Sullivan that “Killing good union jobs on day one with nothing to replace them, is not building back better.”?

Response: We need to build infrastructure that is in our national interest and boosts the U.S. economy, creates good-paying union jobs here in America, and advances our climate and clean

energy goals. We know how to do that; it's the plan the President ran on, and it's the progress he will deliver. In the weeks and months ahead, the Biden-Harris administration will take additional actions to fulfill his commitments to tackle climate change and create good union jobs.

Question 2. LNG/Electronic Vehicle Charging Stations:

- A recent study conducted by ICF International points out that increased exports of clean and abundant U.S. natural gas in the form of liquefied natural gas or LNG could support between 220,000 and 452,000 additional American jobs and add up to \$73 billion to the U.S. economy by 2040. Greater use of natural gas across the world is estimated to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, just as natural gas in U.S. power generation has helped reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions to near 25-year lows.

President Biden campaigned on a vision of installing 500,000 new electric vehicle charging stations by 2030, and, as a candidate, your infrastructure plan called for spending \$6 billion on charging infrastructure. As domestic LNG is increasingly relied upon as a fuel stock for power generation, it is worth noting where the energy to power electric vehicles is derived. For example, if you are operating an electric vehicle in Indiana, the vehicle will primarily be powered by fossil fuels. As more gas fired power plants have come online in Indiana, consumption of natural gas has increased – 4 times greater than in 2010.

- Do agree that LNG is an increasingly dominant and clean burning power source to energize our electric vehicles?
- Additionally, as Secretary, in your suggestion to Congress for infrastructure investment, will you ensure electric vehicles contribute into the Highway Trust Fund in a comparable manner as those who contribute via the fuel tax?

Response: As you know, the President has pledged to put our nation on an irreversible path to achieve net-zero emissions, economy-wide, by no later than 2050. As a first step, let me assure you that if I am confirmed, the Department will listen to the federal scientists who are working on climate change issues. The transportation sector has a key role to play in achieving these commitments given how significant it is as a source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Department will continue to support the advancement of clean fuel technologies, fuel economy improvements, and transportation emissions reductions. This means finding ways to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles and to power them with minimal emissions.

In addition, I know that transportation systems need stable, predictable, multi-year funding in order to thrive and boost our national economic competitiveness. I want to work with this Committee to identify those predictable, multi-year funding sources that adjust to the evolving needs of our transportation system.

Question 3. U.S. Flag LNG Export Fleet:

- Our U.S.-flag international fleet, made up of commercial vessels documented under the laws of the U.S. and owned and operated by U.S. citizens, has been in a state of decline. As the fleet has dwindled, our ability to build these vessels has eroded, along with thousands of manufacturing jobs. With the increased domestic natural gas production, the U.S. has seen an increase in export of this strategic energy asset. ALL exported American

LNG is transported by ship travel on foreign-built and foreign-flag vessels operated by foreign crews.

- Will you work to support the launch an LNG shipbuilding program in the U.S., ramping up over time so that a certain percentage of exported American LNG is required to travel on U.S.-built and –flagged vessels?

Response: If confirmed, I will work to assess the progress that has been made in the domestic construction of small vessels (such as barges) capable of carrying Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), as well as larger LNG-powered vessels. I also look forward to better understanding what additional measures may be necessary to position U.S. shipyards to compete for commercial work against global counterparts, particularly foreign yards that have a high degree of subsidization.

Question 4. Highway Trust Fund:

- As a former Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, you have an intimate knowledge of infrastructure planning and the positive impacts infrastructure investment has on your community and local economy. 2021 will be a big year for infrastructure policy as the FAST Act expires at the end of the fiscal year, the Highway Trust Fund is on the brink of insolvency, and President Biden has signaled his desire to utilize infrastructure investment to jump start our economy as we continue to deal with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a long supporter of highway investment and its role in Alaska’s economy, I understand the great impacts such federal investment can achieve and will be working closely with my colleagues to deliver a robust authorization bill that advances infrastructure investment for years to come. How do you see your agency supporting these efforts and continuing healthy investment into our overutilized but underfunded highway, road and bridge network? In order to pass a long-term infrastructure bill, sustainable funding is needed.
- Will the Administration present to Congress a sincere proposal to pay for infrastructure, based on user fees?

Response: President Biden has been clear that we must Build Back Better. This includes investing in our nation’s transportation infrastructure to repair crumbling roads and bridges and ensuring that our transit systems can continue to meet our mobility needs. We must also ensure that our investments create a more sustainable, resilient economy that is on a path to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The challenge of crumbling roads and obsolete bridges has obviously long pre-dated the COVID-19 crisis, as has the challenge of infrastructure funding. I appreciate the leadership that this Committee has shown on this issue. I know that President Biden is eager to work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to identify funding options and craft legislation that will make the investments our communities so urgently need while creating good-paying jobs. Investments in infrastructure are a force multiplier and generally the return on infrastructure investment is repaid to communities many times over. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee and with the other key Committees to craft a multi-year reauthorization, including addressing our long-standing funding challenges. We must ensure that infrastructure funding is predictable and dedicated.

Question 5. Alaska Uniqueness and Needs:

- Will you commit to supporting ample funding for Essential Air Service in the Budget that DOT puts forward?

Response: The Essential Air Service (EAS) program is profoundly important to rural communities throughout the United States. This program ensures that Americans who do not live near a large city have an opportunity to travel and to take part in commerce. I do fear that many communities would have their eligibility to receive EAS threatened by the severe decline in passenger traffic, which makes compliance with per-service-day enplanement requirements lower, and per-passenger subsidy costs higher. If confirmed, I hope to work with Congress to address this to ensure that communities who receive service continue to do so.

- In addition to aviation, Alaska's unique geography and lack of transportation infrastructure means that my constituents rely on maritime transportation as a lifeline. Alaska has 33,904 miles of shoreline, dwarfing the entire Lower 48. Having fewer miles of paved roads than the state of Rhode Island, Alaska's rivers are our highways. Most of the 200 villages in Alaska are only accessible by air, river, or ocean. A majority of Alaskan communities are dependent on barge deliveries for food, building materials, and everyday household goods necessary to support life in the 21st Century. In many parts of the state, these deliveries occur only two or three times per year. However, even today, many of our communities lack reliable marine access. One of the biggest infrastructure gaps in the State of Alaska, in terms of lack of support mechanisms, is the lack of a waterfront program to support our rural communities. An imperfect but vital mechanism to support these communities and projects has been the DOT BUILD Grants and the MARAD Port Grant programs.
 - Will you commit to ensuring waterfront projects in Alaska receive consideration for DOT grants?

Response: The Department's BUILD and Port Infrastructure Development Grant programs have been both popular and successful in large part because they have enabled local jurisdictions to apply directly for funding. If I am confirmed, I will ensure that the DOT implements a balanced investment program that meets the needs of all communities, including rural communities. I understand that Alaskan waterfront communities have unique needs, and should of course be given fair consideration for all grant opportunities for which they are eligible. I also know that infrastructure investments in rural America are key to supporting economic growth and to ensuring that residents in waterfront communities are not isolated and can access both employment and essential basic services like health care. Of course, I will also ensure that discretionary grant programs meet the requirements set forth in annual appropriations measures.

Question 6. Transportation Equity:

- There has been attention paid to comments of by President Biden in regards to the need to address transportation equity, as adverse effects—air pollution; mass transit disinvestment—have disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities and long been overlooked in transportation.

Our remote communities are primarily Alaska Native residents, and there are adverse impacts due to transportation policy that creates a racial disparity that I can put into two buckets: 1. The lack of federal investment in these communities, and 2. The adverse impacts of environmental crusades that cripple the safety and welfare of our communities, which I discussed with you personally.

For federal investment, the most pointed example I can share with you under the purview of DOT is the dependence of our residents on aviation, the lack of federal investment in infrastructure and technology to support rural isolated communities as compared to the rest of the nation, and how this has translated to safety.

A February NTSB report pointed to a recent 10-year period where the total accident rate in Alaska was 2.35 times higher than the rest of the United States. During the same period, the fatal accident rate in Alaska was 1.34 times higher.

Air service and safety is affected by the availability of infrastructure, and the infrastructure varies significantly across Alaska. Weather reporting and forecasts, and air-to-ground communications are needed to support our communities in order to secure better and safer access.

- Will you support and embolden the efforts of the FAA to identify safety improvements and investments for the Alaska Region?
- Will you take a holistic view of DOT programs to ensure the inherent bias no longer inhibits infrastructure investments in our remote Alaska Native communities?

Response: President Biden has committed his administration to investing at least 40 percent of all infrastructure spending on underserved areas in our country. I look forward to working with you on making good on that promise, and doing it in a way that views equity and inclusivity as critical parts of the decisions we make, should I be confirmed. It is important for all of us to remember that there are underserved communities all over the country, in cities big and small, and in those less populated areas that you have raised. I am committed to working with you on a holistic approach to this investment and directing the Department to determine how we can better meet the needs of communities like the remote Alaska Native communities. In addition, I am eager to work with you and the FAA to ensure that aviation in Alaska is safe.

Question 7. Permitting Reform:

- Given the interest you have expressed in investing in our nation's infrastructure, I hope you share my interest in addressing the bottlenecks in the project delivery process. In order to gain bipartisan support for infrastructure funding in congress, it is essential to include permitting reform or project streamlining proposals. If we want to get projects built, it is necessary to examine the current processes and address existing bottlenecks without compromising adequate consideration of project impacts.
 - What was your experience in South Bend working with the federal resource agencies especially in terms of what works well and what doesn't work well?

Response: I'm very interested in making sure that transportation projects are built efficiently and prioritize job creation, safety, and goods movement, but also that they consider the impacts that infrastructure has had historically – and continues to have on communities. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the Council on Environmental Quality to review the regulations regarding infrastructure permitting and identify opportunities to improve implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In South Bend, I worked on innovative ways to meet wastewater infrastructure requirements through my Smart Sewers initiative. This experience helped me understand the importance of integrated planning. I testified before Congress as Mayor on integrated planning and on the importance of allowing communities to develop integrated plans to meet multiple federal requirements rather than focusing on individual requirements. I am eager to explore ways to bring this integrated, flexible approach to the Department.

My administration also implemented many projects using Federal funds, including transportation projects, and we encountered the complexity of NEPA and related requirements. This experience motivates me to ensure that all regulatory processes are as straightforward and efficient as possible for our intergovernmental partners, consistent with the intent of the law.

Question 8. Climate Change:

- Due to the high cost of construction in Alaska associated with operating in cold weather and remote environments, the formula based allocations are only enough for our State to maintain our the existing road system.
- The National Climate Assessment conducted by the Trump Administration in 2018 identified that infrastructure damage in Alaska from warming could cost the state \$110 million to \$278 million annually.

Excerpt: “Uneven sinking of the ground in response to permafrost thaw is estimated to add between \$3.6 and \$6.1 billion (10% to 20%) to current costs of maintaining public infrastructure such as buildings, pipelines, roads, and airports over the next 20 years. In rural Alaska, permafrost thaw will likely disrupt community water supplies and sewage systems, with negative effects on human health...

“Permafrost – soil saturated with frozen water – is a key feature of the Alaskan landscape. Frozen permafrost is a suitable base for transportation infrastructure such as roads and airfields. In rapidly warming Alaska, however, as permafrost thaws into mud, road shoulders slump, highway cuts slide, and runways sink. Alaska currently spends an extra \$10 million per year repairing permafrost damage.

A recent study, which examined potential climate damage to Alaskan public infrastructure using results from three different climate models, considered 253 airports, 853 bridges, 131 harbors, 819 miles of railroad, 4,576 miles of paved road, and 5,000 miles of unpaved road that could be affected by climate change. The present value of additional public infrastructure costs due to climate change impacts was

estimated at \$5.6 to \$7.6 billion through 2080, or 10% to 12% of total public infrastructure costs in Alaska. These costs might be reduced by 40% with strong adaptation actions.”

- Our communities and our state cannot afford to rebuild this infrastructure through traditional formula allocations. We need the assistance of DOT to identify new funding streams for both rebuilding vital infrastructure, and to identify adaptation strategies for this new reality. As the DOT focuses on climate issues, can you commit to include support for practical adaptation solutions in the agenda?

Response: President Biden has been clear that we must Build Back Better. This includes investing in our nation’s transportation infrastructure to repair crumbling roads and bridges and ensuring that our transit systems can continue to meet our mobility needs. We must also ensure that our investments create a more sustainable, resilient infrastructure that is on a path to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. As part of building more resilient communities, we must ensure that innovative adaptation approaches can be developed and adopted.

Question 9. Maritime COVID-19 Funds:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a tremendous loss of revenue for U.S. businesses that support the maritime transportation system or otherwise garner a large percentage of their income from maritime transportation activity and passengers. The vessels, ports, shipyards, longshoremen, and other interrelated U.S. industries have been disproportionately harmed by the shutdowns necessary to limit the spread of this virus.

This is especially damaging in my State of Alaska where 60% of our visitors typically arrive by passenger vessel. The summer tourism season normally provides a significant source of economic revenue, over \$1.5 billion, and numerous employment opportunities for Alaska coastal communities. However, COVID-19 has decimated our tourism industry, in part, by completely shutting down the primary transportation system for our visitors.

To help address this, Congress passed the Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Act and the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services Act, both of which I co-sponsored, in the final days of the 116th Congress. The Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Act, in particular, established a comprehensive emergency relief authority for the Maritime Administration to provide financial assistance to stabilize and ensure the reliable functioning of the U.S. maritime transportation system in the event of a national emergency like the COVID-19 public health emergency.

- As Secretary of Transportation, how will you ensure that the U.S. maintains a resilient maritime transportation system in the face of this public health and economic crises?
- Will you ensure that any COVID relief proposals put forward by the administration include financial support for the U.S. maritime transportation system, to include the supporting industries and employees?

Response: I believe a strong and resilient maritime industry is fundamentally important for the nation and its industrial base, and is even more so now, as we work to recover from severe health and economic crises. I look forward to engaging with you and other Federal partners to address all pending COVID-19 related concerns of the industry and collaborating with all stakeholders, including labor unions, employers, and other stakeholder groups, to protect our front-line transportation workers.

Question 10. Maritime Vaccinations:

- America’s merchant mariners are an essential workforce with a key role in national security and the national supply chain, and they are in a unique position: many of them live aboard the vessels on which they work, in very close quarters where COVID-19 can spread quickly. Further, many mariners do not live in the states where they report to work, and are away from home for weeks or months at a time, complicating their ability to secure COVID-19 vaccinations in their states of residence. This suggests that a national strategy for mariner vaccination, or at a minimum, clear federal guidance for states, is urgently needed to efficiently immunize this important population against COVID-19 and ensure the safety and continuity of waterborne transportation.
 - Will you commit to direct the Maritime Administration and the Department of Transportation to facilitate the vaccination of mariners and other front-line maritime transportation workers?

Response: If confirmed, I will ensure that DOT takes all measures necessary to ensure the timely, efficient, and safe transport and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, in coordination with other relevant agencies. This will help effectuate CDC's recommendation to support critical infrastructure workers, like those in the maritime industry.

Question 11. Safety Decisions Based on Data:

- The Department of Transportation’s primary mission is to “ensure America has the safest, most efficient and modern transportation system in the world.” In achieving that mission, DOT must thread the proverbial regulatory needle in embracing the use of new technologies and operating models while also ensuring that safety remains the primary priority. Can you assure me that decisions to permit, mandate, or prohibit certain actions via regulation will be based on data ensuring safety and take into the impact of such regulations on stakeholders?

Response: My first priority is safety, and this includes ensuring the safety of any transportation technologies entering the transportation system. With that in mind, I will be guided by data in establishing any new regulations. Let me assure you that if I am confirmed, the Department will respect science and data and always take stakeholder concerns seriously.

Question 12. Grade Crossings:

- Over 95 percent of rail-related deaths in the United States involve drivers going through a grade crossing or a person walking on or along the tracks. Sadly, nearly all of these deaths are preventable. The Section 130 Railway-Highway Crossings Program and other grant programs at the Department have provided funding to state and local governments for grade

crossing improvement and separation projects. And thanks to this federal funding, grade crossing collisions have decreased 36 percent since 2000. As Secretary, would you commit to advocating for increased funding and needed programmatic flexibilities for grade crossing projects in order to meet the significant, widespread demand for these vital safety and highway mobility improvement projects?

Response: Safety is the top priority for the Department of Transportation and I will pursue a comprehensive strategy to reduce and eliminate deaths on our transportation system. These tragic incidents that result from conflicts between rail and other modes of travel are unacceptable and preventable. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you to identify additional resources that will promote multimodal safety and improve safety for all who travel.

Question 13. All-Cargo Aviation Regulations

- All-cargo airlines have played a vital role in delivering critical supplies from PPE to the vaccine throughout the pandemic. One of the hallmarks of our economy and its robust supply chain is that the all-cargo segment of the industry operates under rules that uniquely fit their operational distinctiveness. As a large part of the economic engine that supports the global economy, it is important the all-cargo sector is not encumbered with unnecessary and arbitrary regulations that are not based on sound data and science.
- Given the importance and distinctiveness of the all-cargo aviation sector, as Secretary will you commit to maintaining a regulatory framework that does not inhibit growth and that maintains regulations in the all-cargo sector that are based on sound science and data, along with long-standing precedent?

Response: Any rulemaking issued by DOT will adhere to sound science and data, and, if I am confirmed, I am committed to learning more about the regulatory framework within the all-cargo sector.

Question 14. Contract Towers

- As you may know, aviation is a acritical component of the Alaskan economy, and it's a way of life for communities that depend on aviation for transportation. Four airports in my state rely on the successful Contract Tower Program for cost effective air traffic control services. I strongly support this program, in part, because it enhances aviation safety at smaller airports in Alaska and around the country. Can we count on DOT and the FAA to continue to work with us on Contract Tower-related issues?

Response: The most important thing to me, when it comes to air traffic control, will be the safety of our aviators, crews, and passengers, regardless of ownership. If confirmed, I assure you that any evaluation of air traffic operations will take the Contract Tower Program fully into account, including staffing challenges.

Question 15. Chinese State Owned Rail Enterprises

- The Transit Infrastructure Vehicle Security Act (TIVSA), signed into law as part of the FY2020 NDAA, prevents American taxpayer dollars from being used by transit agencies

to purchase railcars or buses manufactured by Chinese state-owned-enterprises. Would you agree that American taxpayer dollars should not go to Chinese state-owned enterprises? Would you agree that state-owned actors from countries like China have a history of predatory behavior and cybersecurity intrusions, among other actions that run counter to American national security?

Response: With the passage of the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress addressed anti-competitive and cybersecurity concerns identified with respect to Chinese state-owned transit rolling stock manufacturers by limiting the use of Federal dollars by transit agencies in procuring railcars and buses. Congress also created phase-in periods and exceptions to these limitations, however, which the Executive Branch must respect. If confirmed, I will pay close attention to the implementation of this legislation and to the broader concern of Chinese state-owned enterprises in this sector.

- In June 2020, the Department of Defense released a list of 20 companies it says are controlled by the Chinese military. One of these companies is the Chinese Rail Rollingstock Corporation (CRRC). Over the past 5 years, CRRC has made alarming inroads into the U.S. market. This state-owned and directed company has made aggressive advances into the United States by using state-backed financing, below-market pricing, and other anti-competitive tactics to decimate domestic railcar manufacturing with the single end goal of producing all railcars in the PRC. Currently, CRRC also secured more than \$2.6 billion in U.S. taxpayer-supported transit contracts to provide passenger railcars for the cities of Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. As Secretary, what will you do to ensure the Department of Transportation's infrastructure is secure from a Chinese state-owned enterprise, such as CRRC, that has a significant and troubling footprint in the US?

Response: If confirmed, as Secretary of Transportation I will ensure that the Department implements Federal law consistent with the express statutory language. I am eager to support President Biden in ensuring that we lead the world in manufacturing and innovation. That means making sure American industries have a plan to succeed in the 2020s and beyond. China and Chinese companies must be held accountable for the unfair trade practices in which they so often engage, such as predatory behavior and cybersecurity intrusions. If confirmed, I will work with Congress, American workers and businesses to ensure that our approach to procurement and our contracts support American jobs first and foremost. Transportation investments represent one of the best opportunities to spur American manufacturing and create American jobs, and I will seize this opportunity if confirmed.

Questions from Senator Capito

Question 1. As we discussed last month, there have been times in the past where large, urban projects have consumed Department resources and left rural areas underfunded. Secretary Chao did a very good job recognizing that and making a concerted effort to use the Department's discretionary authority and discretionary grant programs, like BUILD and INFRA, to help rural America. Often we hear about how expensive it is to build in urban areas, but a rural state, like West Virginia, are also very expensive place to build highways, given our terrain.

- Will you commit, if confirmed, to working to address the unique transportation needs of rural parts of our country?
- Will you commit to making sure that eligible projects in rural areas receive significant resources from the Department's discretionary grant programs, such as BUILD and INFRA?

Response: The INFRA and BUILD programs have been both popular and successful in large part because they have enabled local jurisdictions to apply directly for funding. If I am confirmed, I will ensure that the DOT implements a balanced investment program that meets the needs of all communities, including rural communities. I understand that rural communities have unique needs, including extensive unmet maintenance needs. I also know that infrastructure investments in rural America are key to supporting economic growth and to ensuring that residents in rural communities are not isolated and can access both employment and essential basic services like health care. Of course, I will also ensure that discretionary grant programs meet the requirements set forth by Congress in legislation.

Question 2. In West Virginia, there are five airports that rely on Essential Air Service, especially with the significant reduction in passenger demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am thankful that the Department made the decision to extend, for the second time, their administration and enforcement of the EAS through December 31, 2020.

- Will you commit, if confirmed, to the Essential Air Service Program (EAS) that guarantees service to small, rural communities?

Response: The Essential Air Service (EAS) is profoundly important to rural communities throughout the United States. This program ensures that Americans who don't live near a large city have an opportunity to travel and to take part in commerce. I do fear that many communities would have their eligibility to receive EAS threatened by the severe decline in passenger traffic, which makes compliance with per-service-day enplanement requirements lower, and per-passenger subsidy costs higher. If confirmed, I hope to work with Congress to address this to ensure that communities who receive service continue to do so.

Question 3. It is my understanding that President Biden plans on implementing "buy American" proposals to spur more federal purchases of U.S. goods and support U.S producers.

- If confirmed, how do you plan on implementing this a "Buy America" policy at the Department?

Response: If I am confirmed as Secretary, I am committed to realizing President Biden’s national pledge to Buy America. DOT can realize this by closing loopholes, reducing and bringing transparency to waivers, identifying American firms to buy from, and strengthening, enforcing, and expanding requirements in infrastructure, manufacturing, and other industries. I will work across the Department’s resources and initiatives to make good on this commitment, and if confirmed, the Department will prioritize implementation of Buy America improvements like these.

Question 4. In a growing number of states, billboard-control laws have been invalidated on free speech (First Amendment) grounds. As these laws come down, it has created a vacuum while states enact new laws that can survive legal scrutiny. This has resulted in state DOTs being caught between being noncompliant with federal court decisions or noncompliant with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations and having their formula funding impacted.

- Do you commit, if confirmed, to work with FHWA to clarify its regulations while protecting free speech in light of these court decisions or to reevaluate along a more commercial regulatory approach as some states have done successfully?

Response: I understand that there has been litigation on this issue. If confirmed, I will work with FHWA and review the court decisions, as well as the Highway Beautification Act and its implementing regulations, to determine the appropriate next steps to assist the states.

Question 5. In 2012, when I was in the House of Representatives I worked with my colleague former-Senator Tom Udall in getting the ROADS SAFE Act included in MAP-21. ROADS SAFE supported the creation of new technologies to reduce the number of alcohol—related fatalities on our nation’s roads. With NHTSA support, the Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS) Program has developed the first-of-its-kind alcohols detection technology. To continue their work, the most recent appropriations bill included \$5.3M for the DADSS and encouraged NHTSA, and its collaboration with the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS), to continue their work of this lifesaving technology.

- If confirmed, do I have your commitment to work with me on alcohol and drug impaired driving policies that will make our nation’s roads safer?

Response: Absolutely. If I am confirmed, safety will be my top priority at the Department. DADSS has the potential to save thousands of lives each year, and I support the use of technology and other safety initiatives to address impaired driving. I consider it important to engage industry and make use of all appropriate tools to ensure that the safest technologies are being employed in our transportation system.

Question 6. Do you commit, if confirmed, to ensure that appropriate Department of Transportation staff promptly and thoroughly respond to questions, information requests, and requests for technical assistance from relevant congressional committees, regardless of whether the question or request is made by the committee’s chairman or the committee’s ranking member?

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure that staff respond to all Congressional inquiries in a timely and appropriate fashion.

Question 7. Does the Biden Administration intend to develop and provide to Congress its own proposal to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs? If so, what is the protected timeframe for that proposal?

Response: President Biden has been clear that we must Build Back Better. This includes investing in our nation's transportation infrastructure to repair crumbling roads and bridges and ensuring our transit systems can continue to meet our mobility needs. We must also ensure our investments create a more sustainable, resilient economy that is on a path to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The challenge of crumbling roads and obsolete bridges has obviously long pre-dated the COVID-19 crisis, as has the challenge of infrastructure funding. I appreciate the leadership that the Committee has shown on this issue. I know that President Biden is eager to work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to identify funding options and craft legislation that will make the investments our communities so urgently need while creating good-paying jobs. Investments in infrastructure are a force multiplier and generally the return on infrastructure investment is repaid to communities many times over. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee and with the other key Committees to craft a multi-year reauthorization, including addressing our long-standing funding challenges.

Question 8. Do you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that the policy, regulatory, and funding decisions made by the Department of Transportation will take these differences into account to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will ensure that the DOT continues to tailor the approach to meet the unique needs of communities facing the COVID-19 crisis. I understand that communities have a variety of needs both in immediate response to the pandemic, as well as extensive unmet maintenance needs. I also know that infrastructure investments are key to supporting economic growth, creating valuable jobs, and ensuring that Americans can access both employment and essential basic services like health care.

Questions from Senator Young

Question 1. Mayor Buttigieg, as you know, Congress will need to reauthorize the federal highway bill by the end of this fiscal year. During our meeting last week, we discussed two of my bipartisan priorities for that legislation. The *DRIVE-Safe Act* – which I introduced with Senator Tester and garnered over 30 bipartisan cosponsors last Congress – would permit younger drivers to operate in interstate commerce provided they receive a higher level of training. My bipartisan *Stop for School Buses Act* would require a comprehensive evaluation of methods to prevent the dangerous and illegal passing of school buses at loading zones.

Will you commit to working with me to include the DRIVE-Safe Act and Stop for School Buses Act in the highway reauthorization bill?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee and with the other key Committees to craft a multi-year reauthorization, including addressing safety and our long-standing funding challenges. Safety will be my top priority, and I will be eager to determine how safety proposals, such as the DRIVE-Safe Act and Stop for School Buses Act, may be considered for inclusion in the reauthorization.

Question 2. The next few years will prove pivotal for the autonomous vehicle (AV) industry, and as the next Secretary of Transportation you will have a large role in ensuring that the U.S. continues to be the global leader in this technology. What I am most struck by with the development of AVs is the potential second and third order effects on our society – from social integration to new economic opportunities, the impact will be significant. Indiana is the “Crossroads of America,” a logistics, manufacturing, and transportation hub and one of the major challenges in logistics is the last mile – getting fresh food or medicines to homes.

What role do you see for autonomous delivery vehicles in last-mile delivery?

How do you plan to ensure the U.S. does not fall behind in the race to safely put AVs on our roads?

Response: We know that autonomous vehicles are part of the future of this nation’s transportation infrastructure. Autonomous vehicles can make our transportation system safer and more efficient, including potentially for last-mile delivery. If confirmed, I am eager to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure that the Federal government is leading the way on ensuring safe autonomous vehicle operations nationwide, and I would work with industry, American workers, safety organizations, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to determine how to create American jobs and advance American technological leadership through this industry.

Question 3. Over 95 percent of rail-related deaths in the United States involve drivers going through a grade crossing or a person walking on or along the tracks. The Section 130 Railway-Highway Crossings Program and other grant programs at DOT have provided funding to state and local governments for grade crossing improvement and separation projects. And while grade crossing collisions have decreased 36 percent since 2000 – over the last three years, Indiana has the third highest rate of highway-rail grade crossing incidents.

As Secretary, would you commit to advocating for robust funding and needed programmatic flexibilities for grade crossing projects in order to meet the demand for these vital safety and highway mobility improvement projects?

Response: Safety is the top priority for the Department of Transportation and I will pursue a comprehensive strategy to reduce and eliminate deaths on our transportation system. These tragic incidents that result from conflicts between rail and other modes of travel are unacceptable and preventable. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you to identify additional resources that will promote multimodal safety and improve safety for all who travel.

Question 4. The U.S. automotive industry is a major driver of the economy and supports over 150,000 jobs throughout the U.S. That's why we must maintain and advance our global competitiveness in the industry and support continued investment and innovation. To that end – vehicle manufacturers have been developing an impressive number of advanced safety technologies and as these systems become more complex, development is increasingly more costly with longer time periods before realizing a positive return on investment.

What policies would you put in place to help stimulate investment in such innovation and advanced safety technologies?

Response: I have been encouraged by the evolving interest in vehicle manufacturers' improving safety outcomes for those inside as well as outside the vehicle. NHTSA is responsible for regulating the safe design and performance aspects of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment, and if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the NHTSA team, industry, and safety advocates to support cross-cutting technology and advanced safety innovations.

Question 5. As you may know, currently there is a 12% federal excise tax on the retail sale of most new heavy-duty trucks. This tax depresses heavy-duty truck sales and delays the purchase of cleaner, safer and more fuel-efficient trucks. And because of the fluctuation in truck sales, the excise tax has been the most inconsistent source of revenue to the highway trust fund over the past 20 years.

What are your thoughts on this federal excise tax on heavy-duty trucks and would you be willing to consider replacing it with a more reliable and equitable funding source?

Response: I will be further examining the impacts of this tax and, if I am confirmed, will work with Congress to ensure that we are making our transportation funding sources predictable, reliable, and equitable.

Question 6. The state of good repair backlog for transit is reaching \$100 billion in deferred maintenance and replacement. The USDOT has found that estimated 40 percent of buses and 23 percent of rail transit assets are in marginal or poor condition. In order for transit agencies to continue providing essential services, our communities need safe and reliable vehicles and infrastructure.

As Secretary, what is your plan to address the \$100 billion in state of good repair needs for transit?

Response: One of the most important things we can do to keep passengers moving across our transit system is to ensure a state of good repair. If buses, rails, and facilities are not functioning properly, they can be unsafe, or just not work properly. President Biden has been clear that we must Build Back Better. This includes investing in our nation's transportation infrastructure to repair crumbling roads and bridges and ensuring our transit systems can continue to meet our mobility needs. The challenge of crumbling roads and obsolete bridges has obviously long predated the COVID-19 crisis, as has the challenge of infrastructure funding. I know that President Biden is eager to work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to identify funding options and craft legislation that will make the investments our communities so urgently need while creating good-paying jobs. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee and with the other key Committees to craft a multi-year reauthorization, including addressing our long-standing funding challenges.

Questions from Senator Scott

Question 1. DOT has approximately 55,000 employees. What experience do you believe makes you most qualified to lead an agency of this size?

Response: As Mayor of South Bend, I led the transformation of a city that was characterized by some in the press as “one of America’s top ten dying cities” onto a different and positive trajectory. My team attracted hundreds of millions in private investment to downtown South Bend and gained national recognition for many of our initiatives, including our Smart Streets initiative. As a mayor overseeing a budget of hundreds of millions of dollars a year, and a city with departments offering a variety of services to its residents, I saw the impact of the federal government’s decisions on local municipalities. I also experienced firsthand how important it was to put strong experts in their field, leaders and managers in positions of influence and power, and rely on the knowledge and expertise of those people in running the organization. I was accustomed to being held accountable by residents of South Bend for delivering the services that they needed and expected every day.

My national engagement on these issues grew deeper when I served as the founding chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Task Force on Automation, convening mayors and experts from around the country to evaluate the effects of automated transportation technology on the future of American cities. And as a candidate for President, I engaged stakeholders on the policy imperatives facing the United States when it comes to these issues--including safety, equity, climate, and job growth--and was proud to put forward one of the most detailed infrastructure plans in the 2020 presidential campaign. I will draw on these experiences, as well as the leadership lessons learned during my service in uniform, to guide me in setting the course of this department, if confirmed. Serving my country in this capacity would be the honor of my career, and if confirmed, I will work every day to make the Administration and the American people proud of our Department of Transportation.

Question 2. For almost a decade, the domestic and global small drone industry has been dominated by Chinese company DJI. DJI was recently placed on the entity list for supporting human rights violations. DJI also presents serious cybersecurity risks, owing to its close relationship with the Chinese Communist Party. DJI’s impact on domestic manufacturers has been equally concerning. According to the Defense Department, DJI has engaged in predatory dumping practices that deflated prices, decimating U.S. competitors in the past and depriving consumers of choice.

- a. First, as Secretary, what steps will you take to support the emerging domestic drone industry?
- b. Second, at least until recently, DJI held a position of influence on the FAA’s Drone Advisory Committee and participated in other DOT and FAA working groups on Remote Identification and other matters. If confirmed, how will you guard against undue influence from companies like DJI that are beholden to the Chinese government and known to support human rights abuses?

Response: The main focus of the FAA is safety. I am a strong proponent of a regulatory framework in which the unmanned aircraft industry can both integrate safely into the National Aviation System and develop new technologies. If confirmed, I will work with the FAA on an integration structure that will allow for a better understanding of risk and unintended consequences. I will look at expanding the conversation to include representatives from airports, state and local governments, rural communities, and industry. With regards to DJI, as you noted, it is no longer part of the Drone Advisory Committee, and I look forward to working with you and other concerned Members of Congress on this issue, if I am confirmed.

Question 3. Last Congress, I introduced legislation called the RIDE Act, with Senator Udall, which would require DOT, through National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to implement a timeline that would require blood alcohol testing technology in all new vehicles.

- a. The Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety Program (DADSS) has received around \$50 million from Congress each year since around 2008 to develop technology like this. I believe it's far past time to let the private sector come up with a solution that could save 9,400 lives a year. What are your thoughts on this?

Response: If I am confirmed, safety will be my top priority at the Department. DADSS has the potential to save thousands of lives each year, and I support the use of technology and other safety initiatives to address impaired driving. I consider it important to engage industry and make use of all appropriate tools to ensure that the safest technologies are being employed in our transportation system.

Questions from Senator Blackburn

Autonomous Vehicles

1. **Mayor Buttigieg:** There has been significant work in recent years related to automated vehicles. Despite attention to the issue, progress in advancing measures that would establish a clear framework to encourage and support the safe development, testing, and deployment of automated vehicles has been slow and inconsistent.
 - *Is the existing exemptions limit of 2,500 vehicles sufficient to allowing the development of this industry?*
 - *Will you support efforts by NHTSA to utilize existing authority to help facilitate the advancement of autonomous vehicles or examine ways to create new authorities that allows for the testing and deployment of automated driving systems?*

Response: We know that autonomous vehicles are part of the future of this nation's transportation infrastructure. Autonomous vehicles can make our transportation system safer and more efficient. If confirmed, I am eager to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure that the Federal government is leading the way on ensuring safe autonomous vehicle operations nationwide, including examining whether the current exemption limits are sufficient. I would work with industry, American workers, safety organizations, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to determine how to create American jobs and advance American technological leadership through this industry.

Mineral Definition

1. **Mayor Buttigieg:** The raw materials provided by the aggregate industry are necessary for virtually every public works project across the country, and these raw material operators adhere to various federal agencies concerning the rocks they quarry.
 - *How would you support the need for accurate mineral definitions to maintain an efficient construction supply chain and deliver infrastructure projects in a timely manner?*

Response: Access to aggregates and construction materials is critically important for the maintenance and development of our infrastructure system. There are a limited number of existing aggregate resource sites in our nation and we need to take coordinated efforts to understand how to ensure the availability and reasonable price of these resources without compromising our commitments to safety or environmental protection. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and other stakeholders to explore what actions can be taken to sustain our supply of aggregates.

Transportation Systems

1. **Mayor Buttigieg:** Many cities have access to a wealth of information and data for planning purposes, but it is often siloed within different city departments and agencies.

- *How can DOT help drive efficiencies and work to see that data is adequately and safely shared between different public agencies, the private sector, and stakeholders to ensure delivery of better transportation systems?*

Response: Safely sharing data is critical to creating a safe and inclusive transportation system. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you and our State and local officials, community stakeholders, and the private sector to support best practices for sharing data safely to deliver a safe and inclusive transportation system. I consider it important to work across silos and break down barriers to information sharing whenever this can benefit the public.

Truck Driver Shortage

1. **Mayor Buttigieg:** The U.S. truck driver shortage is worsened by the industry's struggles to recruit new drivers.
 - *Will you commit to working with me to fix the regulatory barriers that prevent or deter capable drivers from entering the trucking workforce?*

Response: The goal of regulation is to set standards to keep the public and workers safe and able to earn a fair wage. We should always work to ensure that such regulations are delivering on their purpose in a way that it is balanced with other considerations. If I am confirmed, I will work with you to better understand all potential workforce obstacles.

Drones

1. **Mayor Buttigieg:** Small electric drones are becoming the tool of choice to inspect critical infrastructure. Utilities use drones to inspect power lines to find flaws before they start fires; railroads inspect tracks for problems that could cause derailments and delays; and state transportation departments inspect bridges without having workers rappel from dangerous heights. These operations make our society safer, and more efficient.
 - *Will you commit to working with me to fix the regulatory barriers that prevent or deter capable drivers from entering the trucking workforce?*

Response: Safety is our top priority. Efforts to use technology that augment and enhance our workers' safety, including UAS, are of high interest. If confirmed, I will continue to have the FAA work with stakeholders and Congress on this issue.