

Sean Duffy, Secretary
Budget Hearing – U.S. Department of Transportation

Representative Dale W. Strong
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Deadline for Submission: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 5 PM EST

Question Subject Area:

Question Background:

Vulcan Materials Company is the nation's largest producer of construction aggregates — primarily crushed stone, sand, and gravel — and a major producer of aggregates-based construction materials, including asphalt and ready mixed concrete.

To distribute those materials, Vulcan built the only deep-water port on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico and, over decades, also invested in a U.S. distribution network. On May 5, 2022, the Mexican government illegally shut down Vulcan's operations. President López Obrador decreed the property a Naturally Protected Area (NPA) on September 23, 2024, precluding Vulcan from using its property for productive purposes. In early October, President Sheinbaum said she planned to finalize the management plan for the NPA by the end of February 2025 – without any input from Vulcan.

Last week, Mexico's Attorney General asked the court to issue a warrant purportedly to allow Mexican authorities to forcibly enter El Corchalito — once again — to measure the quarrying area for the third time. The Attorney General also stated that it plans to "locate and seize" Vulcan's machinery and equipment purportedly used in the alleged crime even though there have been no operations in any of Vulcan's lots for over four years as a result of Mexico's unlawful closure of those operations.

Question:

Secretary Duffy – I would like to bring to your attention to an ongoing matter that impacts both my district and the entire state of Alabama. The Mexican government has shut down and expropriated the land and quarry of an Alabama company that is a major provider of construction materials to critical infrastructure projects in the U.S.

My colleagues across Congress and the Trump administration have been working to resolve this ongoing issue, and I look forward to engaging further with your office on the matter. If Mexico tries to remove this company from its lawfully held land, can you commit to working with me and this committee to ensure no entity or company involved in these actions would be able to benefit from stealing the land and port of a US company?

Sean Duffy, Secretary
**Budget Hearing – Fiscal Year 2026 Request for the Department of
Transportation**

Chairman Steve Womack
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Deadline for Submission: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 5 PM EST

Citizenship of U.S. Carriers

Question Background: DOT regulations (49 U.S.C. 40102 (a)) requires that air carriers operating within the United States must be organized under the laws of the United States and also requires that at least 75 percent of the voting interest is owned or controlled by persons that are citizens of the United States. There are concerning reports that the Biden Administration did not enforce the citizenship requirements with regard to helicopter operations and that some U.S. operators have written formal complaints to DOT.

Question: Will you assure us that the Department will carefully look into this issue and take proactive steps to ensure that citizenship and control regulations are appropriately enforced?

Contract Towers

Question Background: I am a strong supporter of the FAA Contract Tower Program, which enhances aviation safety at smaller airports in around the country and in Arkansas, including at four airports in my district. Contract towers play a critical role in our National Airspace System, providing air traffic services at airports that would otherwise lack such service.

Question: I applaud your efforts to modernize our air traffic control system and supercharge the air traffic controller workforce. Will these efforts also boost controller staffing at contract towers or are there other efforts of the FAA to ensure contract towers are properly staffed as well? What efforts is the FAA taking to ensure these controllers have the proper technology to perform their jobs?

Airport Development

Question Background: Airports receiving federal grants are required to obtain different types of approvals from the FAA before they can move forward with their development projects. In the past, the FAA has taken an excessive amount of time to issue grants and necessary project approvals.

Question: As you work to cut federal red tape and make DOT and FAA more efficient, what actions will your department take to speed up the review process and avoid unnecessary delays, especially for safety-critical airport projects?

PNT/GPS Backup

Question Background: GPS is the primary global system to provide capabilities for civilian, government and military uses. Loss of GPS Timing signals would cause significant adverse

impacts to cellular networks, the power grid, financial markets, the military, aviation, ground transportation, farming, and first responders, among others. Congress established a PNT technologies program in 2022 to allow for the wide adoption of multiple technologies that provide the necessary GPS backup and complementary PNT as identified in 2021 in the “Complementary PNT and GPS Backup Technologies Demonstration Report” (DOT-VNTSC-20-07). Congress has appropriated \$38 million for PNT.

Question: Can you please provide an update on the implementation of the PNT program, including efforts at VOLPE including public-private partnership models?

US Merchant Marine Academy Capital Improvement Plan

Question Background: Decades of underinvestment at the US Merchant Marine Academy in staffing and infrastructure have placed the Academy at risk of losing its accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. According to the 2021 Congressionally mandated National Academy of Public Administration report, the greatest risk to USMMA’s future is doing nothing to significantly address the longstanding issues that put the safety and health of the midshipmen and the entire USMMA community in peril. Current estimates to execute a full-scale modernization of the campus over 10 years is \$1.02 billion, and the USMMA Alumni Association and Foundation is seeking \$161 million for the first installment in FY26.

Question: Can you please provide an assessment of your findings at the United States Merchant Marine Academy and an update on your plans to improve campus facilities?