



March 1, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Marty Walsh
Secretary
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Secretary Walsh,

Technological change has always been a hallmark of the transportation sector. But with recent advancements in automation, robotics and artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies, the pace of and impact of technological change has been more rapid and significant than at any other time in the history of human mobility.

While our organizations represent different stakeholder communities with diverse perspectives, we are firmly aligned in our belief that the pace of technological change necessitates a more responsive federal apparatus that brings together the voice of leaders in innovation, employers, unions, and other key stakeholders to better understand and manage the broad impacts of new technologies on the workforce.

Our joint goal is to thoughtfully facilitate development of safer and more effective transportation services while enabling workforce development and the creation of good jobs. Together, we recognize that many new transportation technologies can deliver significant societal benefits by improving safety and the quality of work for transportation workers, reducing fatalities and injuries, reducing harmful emissions and congestion, and providing greater access to mobility.

We agree that a stronger partnership is needed with the federal government and partners in research and academia to collect more and better data measuring the impacts of new technologies on the current and future workforce. By facilitating a more open dialogue between stakeholders, we know we will be better equipped to avoid the challenges that have been associated with major shifts in technology, work across the whole of government to strengthen skills training programs in cooperation with labor organizations and employers, and ensure we are planning for the needs of the future workforce.

In some sectors of our transportation system, the tools and processes for managing technological change are well established and are already managed through collective bargaining agreements, registered apprenticeships, joint labor-management partnerships, or through other existing frameworks. While the following recommendations are not intended to speak to or augment every one of those arrangements, we also know that many sectors lack the kinds of data, workforce

training programs, or collaborative partnerships with the federal government that would greatly benefit their ability to manage change within their industries.

To meet those goals, we stand together in support of the following four actions that would better equip employers and labor organizations to meet our workforce needs in partnership with the federal government:

- 1) First, the Department of Transportation, Department of Labor, and other relevant agencies must collect robust and sound data on the impact that the introduction of new techniques and technologies have and will have on the workforces that will be necessary to maximize their societal benefits. At a minimum, the federal government should collect strong statistical data that tracks and analyzes job creation, job displacement, job retention, job or wage degradation, economic and racial inequality, changes in manufacturing demands, and skills gaps or the repurposing of skillsets in demand due to new technologies. This data must be quantified to show how different, underprivileged parts of the workforce are impacted. Armed with this high-quality data, industry leaders, employers, and labor organizations alike can work in partnership with the federal government to inform and develop strong policies intended to ensure that the development and deployment of innovative transportation technologies align with our national workforce needs.
- 2) Second, the Department of Transportation should work in partnership with grant recipients to conduct Workforce Impact Assessments (WIAs) when federal grants support the testing or deployment of new transportation technologies. In addition to supplementing statistical data collection, WIAs can be a powerful tool for measuring the qualitative impacts of technology on the workforce. For example, we know that new technologies often result in shifting workloads away from physical demands towards increased cognitive demands in the transportation sector, which can be difficult to measure. Tools like skills mapping should also be part of WIA development as they can help us better understand what skills are required and what it would take for incumbent workers to adapt to new and evolving job demands. Data collected as part of a WIA should also identify potential safety improvements of a new technology for the employee and for the traveling public.

The development of these tools should be done in close consultation with labor organizations, employers, and the business community. Using the opportunity of federal grant-making to evaluate these types of impacts will better prepare all partners in the transportation sector to meet the challenges and opportunities created by technological change.

- 3) The federal agencies referenced above, and other supporting federal agencies, should actively collaborate, in consultation with industry, labor organizations, and academia, to help prepare the incumbent workforce for transitions in their workplace and to ensure a pipeline of skilled workers for the jobs of the future. By providing technical assistance and capacity building for tools and initiatives such as the design and deployment of worker-centered workforce training programs, joint labor-management training partnerships, registered apprenticeships, sector partnerships, training consortia, and more, the federal

government will reach workers where they already are and invest in solutions that can have a proven impact in a relatively short amount of time.

- 4) Finally, technical assistance and capacity building will be critical if the Departments are to successfully scale workforce development that fosters labor/management partnerships to meet the dual needs of employers and workers and accelerate the adoption of innovative models. This includes working with employers, unions, and labor/management workforce organizations as well as educational and community partners to develop strategies, programs, processes, and resources that will support federal efforts to implement best practice workforce models – including expanded opportunities for underserved populations. Capacity building will involve coordinating subject matter experts, developing qualitative and quantitative data grounded materials, generating webinar and traditional coursework, and engaging national and local unions. Moreover, hands-on planning, design, and delivery support to expand employer and union capacity, to boost worker engagement, and to ensure the uptake of inclusive, high-quality workforce development programming is anticipated.

We stand ready to aid this Administration in meeting these challenges and look forward to a close partnership as we do so together.

Sincerely,



Greg Regan
President
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO



Laura D. Chace
President & CEO
ITS America