

February 12, 2026

Michael A. Halem  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C., 20590

**RE: Transportation Research and Development Strategic Plan; Request for Information  
Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-2085**

Mr. Halem:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I am pleased to respond to the Department of Transportation's (DOT) request for information (RFI) regarding the Research, Development, and Technology (RD&T) Strategic Plan for fiscal years (FY) 2026-2030. TTD is America's largest transportation labor federation, representing skilled union trades members who work across all modes of transportation, including in aviation, transit, rail, and maritime. Technological change in the transportation sector is not new to transportation workers. They have lived through generations of new breakthroughs and have demonstrated their skill and adaptability as innovations accelerated and placed new demands on them while redefining our system of mobility. We therefore have a vested interest in the upcoming RD&T Strategic Plan, and as such, encourage the DOT to take our input and that of our affiliates into consideration.

We urge the DOT to meaningfully consider affected workforces throughout the research and development process. Accordingly, we strongly recommend that the DOT actively include workers and their unions at all levels of the R&D process. Formalized input from workers and their unions can better orient RD&T investments to ensure they achieve broad public benefits, mitigate worker de-skilling and displacement, and create and retain good jobs. The DOT's investments should never undermine workers through hasty sponsorship of labor-replacing technologies or low-road employment models.

In addition to addressing workforce impacts, our shared safety goals are better served by inviting workers and their representatives to be partners in innovation. The firsthand knowledge, skills, and experience of transportation workers must be an integral part of the research and development process.

Transportation labor unions have fought for decades to ensure that federal investments made in America's transportation infrastructure are tied to strong policies that support and create good jobs

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

815 Black Lives Matter Plaza, NW / 4<sup>th</sup> Floor / Washington, DC 20006

Tel: 202.628.9262 / [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org)

Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer

and safe and equitable workplaces for America's workers. We are committed to bringing the voices of transportation unions and their skilled members to the DOT's RD&T process.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this proceeding and look forward to working with the DOT in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Regan", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Greg Regan  
President