DOT Policy Statement

The world is facing an existential climate crisis. Climate change presents a significant and growing risk to the safety, effectiveness, equity and sustainability of our transportation infrastructure and the communities it serves. We have a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to address this risk. The United States Department of Transportation (DOT or Department) is going to lead the way.

Over the last decade, DOT has integrated climate change impacts, adaptation, and resilience into domestic and international planning, operations, policies, and programs. However, more must be done. The Department has the opportunity and obligation to accelerate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and make our transportation infrastructure more climate change resilient now and in the future. To do this, we will ensure that Federally supported transportation infrastructure, and DOT programs, policies, and operations, both consider climate change impacts ***and*** incorporate adaptation and resilience solutions whenever possible, by following these guiding principles:

- **Use Best-available Science.** Adaptation and resilience strategies will be grounded in the best-available scientific understanding of climate change risks, impacts, and vulnerabilities. Our adaptive actions will not be delayed—all plans and actions will be continuously reevaluated as our understanding of climate impacts evolves.
- **Prioritize the Most Vulnerable.** Adaptation and resilience plans will prioritize helping people, communities, and infrastructure that are most vulnerable to climate impacts—this includes underrepresented groups, low-income communities, communities of color, limited English proficient communities, and individuals with disabilities. These plans will be designed and implemented through a transparent process with meaningful involvement in decision making from all parts of society. Issues of inequality and environmental justice associated with climate change impacts and adaptation will be addressed.
- **Preserve Ecosystems.** Protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services through adaptation strategies will increase resilience of human and natural systems to climate change and other risks, providing benefits to society and the environment (e.g. in a coastal setting, wetlands serve as buffers to transportation assets and can minimize the impacts of storm surge).
- **Build Community Relationships.** Adaptation and resilience require coordination across multiple sectors, geographical scales, and units of government. Our actions will build on existing efforts, knowledge, and meaningful engagement of communities that are impacted. Because impacts, vulnerabilities, priorities and needs vary by region and locale, adaptation will be most effective when driven by local and regional risks and needs.
- **Engage Globally.** The transformation of the global transport sector offers some of the most significant opportunities for deep greenhouse gas emissions cuts, healthier cities, and a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to build resilient infrastructure. DOT is committed to working with other nations, multilateral organizations, industry, and non-governmental organizations to lead a global transformation that addresses climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

We cannot do this alone. State, regional, local, territorial, and Tribal transportation agencies are encouraged to build resilience and adaptation into their planning and decision-making processes. Private sector innovation and investment in climate change resiliency and adaptation is needed. By working together, we can ensure that our transportation systems can adapt to future changes, minimize negative impacts, take advantage of innovative opportunities, and better serve people and communities, especially those traditionally vulnerable and underserved.

Secretary Pete Buttigieg