

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8748

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to carry out certain activities related to surface transportation research, development, and deployment, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 12, 2026

Mr. FONG (for himself and Mrs. SYKES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to carry out certain activities related to surface transportation research, development, and deployment, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Surface Transpor-
5 tation Research and Development Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION PROGRAMS RE-**
2 **LATED TO HIGHWAY AND INTERMODAL**
3 **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.**

4 Subsection (c) of section 503 of title 23, United
5 States Code, is amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (3)(D), by striking “fiscal
7 years 2022 through 2026” and inserting “fiscal
8 years 2027 through 2031”;

9 (2) in paragraph (4)(I)(i), by striking “fiscal
10 years 2022 through 2026” and inserting “fiscal
11 years 2027 through 2031”; and

12 (3) in paragraph (5)(C), by striking “fiscal
13 years 2022 through 2026” and inserting “fiscal
14 years 2027 through 2031”.

15 **SEC. 3. UPDATE TO TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS PRO-**
16 **GRAMS.**

17 Section 6302 of title 49, United States Code, is
18 amended—

19 (1) in subsection (b)(3) by adding at the end
20 the following new subparagraph:

21 “(C) LOCATION.—The Director shall be lo-
22 cated within the organizational structure of the
23 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research
24 and Technology.”;

25 (2) in subsection (d)(2), in the matter pre-
26 ceding subparagraph (A), by striking “a significant

1 role in” and inserting “exclusive authority over”;
2 and

3 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
4 section:

5 “(e) COORDINATION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure
7 the following:

8 “(A) Any activity of the Department re-
9 lated to the collection, analysis, and use of data
10 for a statistical purpose is conducted in a man-
11 ner that protects the trust of information pro-
12 viders and maintains the confidentiality, objec-
13 tivity, and integrity of such data, in accordance
14 with subchapter III of chapter 35 of title 44.

15 “(B) The Department and each operating
16 administration thereof is following, as appro-
17 priate, best practices, technical standards, and
18 requirements in accordance with subchapter II
19 of chapter 3 of title 5, subchapter III of chapter
20 35 of title 44, and any other appropriate Fed-
21 eral policy in the collection, analysis, and use of
22 any transportation-related data intended for a
23 statistical purposes.

24 “(2) STATISTICAL PURPOSE DEFINED.—In this
25 subsection, the term ‘statistical purpose’ has the

1 meaning given such term in section 3561 of title
2 44.”.

3 **SEC. 4. TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS COORDINATION**
4 **COUNCIL.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title 49, United States Code, is
6 amended by inserting after section 6302 the following new
7 section:

8 **“§ 6302A. Transportation Statistics Coordination**
9 **Council.**

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
11 date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall
12 establish the ‘Transportation Statistics Coordination
13 Council’ (in this subsection referred to as the ‘Council’)
14 to coordinate statistical activities and evaluations across
15 the Department.

16 “(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall be composed
17 of a representative from each operating administration of
18 the Department that conducts a program related to any
19 statistical activities and evaluations documented by the
20 Department. The Secretary may designate additional
21 members to the Council as the Secretary determines ap-
22 propriate.

23 “(c) CHAIRPERSON.—The Director shall serve as the
24 Chairperson of the Council.

1 “(d) DUTIES.—The Council shall carry out the fol-
2 lowing:

3 “(1) Assist the Director in carrying out the du-
4 ties required under subsection (b)(3) of section
5 6302.

6 “(2) Review the comprehensive data inventory
7 of the Department developed and maintained pursu-
8 ant to section 3511 of title 44, to identify any data
9 assets of the Department that are duplicative or
10 fragmented across the Department;

11 “(3) Identify any opportunity to reduce burden,
12 including with respect to a State, local, or Tribal
13 government or a private sector entity, by consoli-
14 dating into a centralized repository managed by the
15 Director similar collection of information from dif-
16 ferent operating administrations.

17 “(4) Advise the Director with respect to the de-
18 velopment and implementation of Department-wide
19 data guidelines, standards, metadata schemas, and
20 common taxonomies related to any statistical activi-
21 ties and evaluations conducted by the Department.

22 “(e) REPORT.—Not later than three years after the
23 date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary
24 shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and In-
25 frastructure and the Committee on Science, Space, and

1 Technology of the House of Representatives and the Com-
2 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
3 Senate a report that includes information related to the
4 following:

5 “(1) A comprehensive inventory of any statis-
6 tical activities and evaluations conducted by the De-
7 partment.

8 “(2) A plan for the elimination of any statis-
9 tical activities and evaluations conducted outside the
10 Bureau that duplicate the duties required under sub-
11 section (b)(3) of section 6302, including information
12 relating to the following:

13 “(A) Any plan for an order or agreement
14 under section 1535 of title 31.

15 “(B) An analysis related to whether all
16 statistical activities and evaluations of the De-
17 partment should be centralized within the Bu-
18 reau.

19 “(3) A governance strategy and any rec-
20 ommendations to ensure the Department and any
21 operating administration of the Department is fol-
22 lowing the Department-wide data guidelines, stand-
23 ards, metadata schemas, and common taxonomies
24 referred to in subsection (d)(4).

1 “(4) An assessment of any administrative, tech-
2 nical, or legal barrier to the governance strategy and
3 recommendations described in paragraph (3), includ-
4 ing any findings or milestones for implementation by
5 the Department the Council determines necessary to
6 achieve a unified, secure, and efficient departmental
7 statistical infrastructure in accordance with such
8 subparagraph.

9 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 “(1) BURDEN; COLLECTION OF INFORMA-
11 TION.—The terms ‘burden’ and ‘collection of infor-
12 mation’ have the meaning given such terms in sec-
13 tion 3502 of title 44.

14 “(2) EVALUATION.—The term ‘evaluation’ has
15 the meaning given such term in section 311 of title
16 5.

17 “(3) STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES.—The term ‘sta-
18 tistical activities’ has the meaning given such term
19 in section 3561 of title 44.”.

20 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
21 in chapter 63 of title 49, United States Code, is amended
22 by inserting after the item relating to section 6302 the
23 following new item:

 “6302A. Transportation Statistics Coordination Council.”.

1 **SEC. 5. AMENDMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY TRANSPOR-**
2 **TATION CENTERS PROGRAM.**

3 Section 5505 of title 49, United States Code, is
4 amended—

5 (1) in subparagraph (A) of subsection (c)(4), by
6 striking “not more than”; and

7 (2) in paragraph (3) of subsection (d), by strik-
8 ing “fiscal years 2022 through 2026” and inserting
9 “fiscal years 2027 through 2031”.

10 **SEC. 6. OPEN RESEARCH INITIATIVE.**

11 Section 5506 of title 49, United States Code, is
12 amended—

13 (1) in subsection (f), in the matter preceding
14 paragraph (1), by striking “Not less frequently than
15 biennially, in accordance” and inserting “In accord-
16 ance”;

17 (2) in subsection (i), by striking “2022 through
18 2026” and inserting “2027 through 2031”;

19 (3) by redesignating subsection (i) as subsection
20 (j); and

21 (4) by inserting after subsection (h) the fol-
22 lowing new subsection:

23 “(i) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop
25 an implementation plan to transition the advanced
26 transportation research pilot program described in

1 subsection (b) to a sustained open research initia-
 2 tive.

3 “(2) REPORT.—Not later than two years after
 4 the date of the enactment of this subsection, the
 5 Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Trans-
 6 portation and Infrastructure and the Committee on
 7 Science, Space, and Technology of the House of
 8 Representatives and the Committee on Commerce,
 9 Science, and Transportation and the Committee on
 10 Environment and Public Works of the Senate a re-
 11 port that includes information relating to the fol-
 12 lowing:

13 “(A) The implementation plan under para-
 14 graph (1).

15 “(B) How the Secretary is carrying out
 16 such implementation plan.”.

17 **SEC. 7. STUDY ON AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO**
 18 **THE SAFETY EFFECTS OF EMERGING**
 19 **HEADLAMP TECHNOLOGIES.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
 21 date of the enactment of this Act, Secretary of Transpor-
 22 tation (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”), act-
 23 ing through the Assistant Secretary of Transportation for
 24 Research and Technology, and in consultation with the
 25 Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Ad-

1 ministration, shall seek to enter into an agreement with
2 an appropriate entity with relevant expertise, as deter-
3 mined by the Secretary, to—

4 (1) conduct a study on the effects of high-inten-
5 sity light-emitting diode (LED), matrix LED, and
6 other emerging headlamp technologies with respect
7 to driver visibility, glare exposure, and roadway safe-
8 ty; and

9 (2) make recommendations relating thereto.

10 (b) CONTENTS.—

11 (1) STUDY.—The study under subsection (a)
12 may include any of the following:

13 (A) An assessment of any of the following:

14 (i) Luminous intensity, total luminous
15 flux, and beam-pattern characteristics of
16 headlamp technologies utilized in road ve-
17 hicles.

18 (ii) The role of vehicle mounting
19 height and headlamp aim in real-world
20 glare exposure, including the geometric
21 interaction between headlamps and occu-
22 pants of preceding or oncoming vehicles,
23 across a range of vehicles and vehicle
24 mounting heights.

1 (iii) The physiological and cognitive
2 effects of high-intensity headlamp exposure
3 on the following:

4 (I) Drivers, with particular atten-
5 tion to older drivers, as defined by the
6 appropriate entity referred to in such
7 subsection, and drivers with cataracts
8 or other visual impairments.

9 (II) The ability of drivers to vis-
10 ually identify and avoid vulnerable
11 road users, including pedestrians,
12 bicyclists, and motorecyclists.

13 (B) An analysis of the adequacy of existing
14 headlamp photometric test procedures to ad-
15 dress the luminance, spectral, and glare charac-
16 teristics of high-intensity LED, matrix LED,
17 and other emerging headlamp technologies.

18 (2) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The recommenda-
19 tions under subsection (a) may include a rec-
20 ommendation regarding how to mitigate a negative
21 finding of the study under such subsection with re-
22 spect to the effect of high-intensity LED, matrix
23 LED, or another emerging headlamp technology on
24 driver visibility, glare exposure, or roadway safety.

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after entering
2 into an agreement under subsection (a), the Secretary
3 shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and
4 Technology and the Committee on Transportation and In-
5 frastructure of the House of Representatives and the Com-
6 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
7 Senate, and make publicly available on a website of the
8 Department of Transportation, a report that includes in-
9 formation relating to the findings of the study conducted
10 pursuant to such subsection and the recommendations re-
11 lating thereto.

12 **SEC. 8. STRATEGY ON RECLAIMED ASPHALT PAVEMENT.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
14 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Trans-
15 portation (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”),
16 acting through the Administrator of the Federal Highway
17 Administration, shall submit to the Committee on Science,
18 Space, and Technology and the Committee on Transpor-
19 tation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives,
20 and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transpor-
21 tation and the Committee on Environment and Public
22 Works of the Senate a strategy to encourage the standard-
23 ization and utilization of reclaimed asphalt pavement on
24 roadways nationwide and ensure asphalt mixture quality
25 does not decrease as a result of such utilization.

1 (b) CONTENTS.—The strategy under subsection (a)
2 shall include information relating to the following:

3 (1) A review and inventory of the activities of
4 the Secretary with respect to reclaimed asphalt pave-
5 ment.

6 (2) An analysis of cost savings related to in-
7 creasing the allowable use of reclaimed asphalt pave-
8 ment on roadways nationwide.

9 (3) A description of any such activities related
10 to supporting the development of technical stand-
11 ards, best practices, methodologies, and frameworks
12 for testing and use of reclaimed asphalt pavement.

13 (4) Recommendations to promote through pro-
14 grams of the Department of Transportation the uti-
15 lization of reclaimed asphalt pavement.

16 (c) CONSULTATION.—In submitting the strategy
17 under subsection (a), the Secretary, acting through the
18 Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration,
19 shall carry out the following:

20 (1) Seek to consult with representatives from
21 the following:

22 (A) Institutions of higher education.

23 (B) State departments of transportation.

24 (C) Units of local government.

25 (D) Metropolitan planning organizations.

1 (E) Regional transportation planning orga-
2 nizations.

3 (F) Nonprofit research organizations.

4 (G) Private sector entities that produce as-
5 phalt materials.

6 (2) Consult with the following:

7 (A) The heads of other relevant Federal
8 departments and agencies.

9 (B) Any other relevant entity as the Sec-
10 retary determines appropriate.

11 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
13 term “institution of higher education” has the
14 meaning given such term in section 101 of the High-
15 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

16 (2) METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZA-
17 TION.—The term “metropolitan planning organiza-
18 tion” has the meaning given such term in section
19 5303 of title 49, United States Code.

20 (3) NONPROFIT RESEARCH ORGANIZATION.—
21 The term “nonprofit research organization” has the
22 meaning given the term “nonprofit institution” in
23 section 4 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Inno-
24 vation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3703).

1 (4) RECLAIMED ASPHALT PAVEMENT.—The
2 term “reclaimed asphalt pavement” means material
3 that is removed in the resurfacing, rehabilitation, or
4 reconstruction of asphalt pavement and processed
5 for utilization in the production of new asphalt pave-
6 ment.

7 (5) REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING OR-
8 GANIZATION.—The term “regional transportation
9 planning organization” means an organization des-
10 ignated under subsection (l) of section 5304 of title
11 49, United States Code.

12 **SEC. 9. RAIL RESEARCH PROGRAMS.**

13 Section 24910 of title 49, United States Code, is
14 amended—

15 (1) in subsection (a)—

16 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “and”
17 after the semicolon;

18 (B) in paragraph (4), by striking the pe-
19 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

20 (C) by adding at the end the following new
21 paragraph:

22 “(5) address safety challenges with modern and
23 future infrastructure and technology related to com-
24 muter rail, passenger rail, freight rail, and other rail
25 networks.”;

1 (2) in subsection (b)—

2 (A) in paragraph (13), by striking “and”
3 after the semicolon;

4 (B) by redesignating paragraph (14) as
5 paragraph (15); and

6 (C) by inserting after paragraph (13) the
7 following new paragraph:

8 “(14) to review safety standards related to the
9 transportation of hazardous materials on freight rail;
10 and”;

11 (3) in paragraph (3) of subsection (c), by strik-
12 ing “2019” and inserting “2031”; and

13 (4) in subsection (e), by striking “2010 through
14 2013” and inserting “2027 through 2031”.

○