

Oversight of Surface Transportation Infrastructure

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Agenda



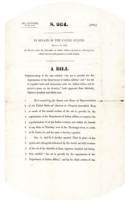
Overview on GAO



Discussion of Surface Transportation Work



Examples of GAO's Surface Transportation Work



Summary of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

About the U.S. GAO

- Called the "congressional watchdog."
- Examine how federal taxpayer dollars are spent and provide Congress and federal agencies with objective, non-partisan, fact-based information.
- Help the government save money and work more efficiently.



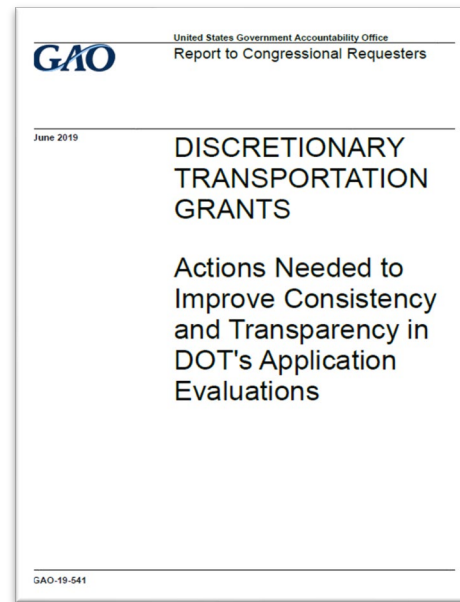
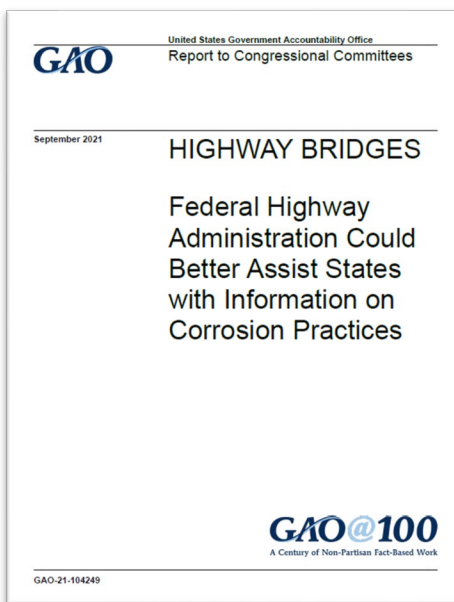
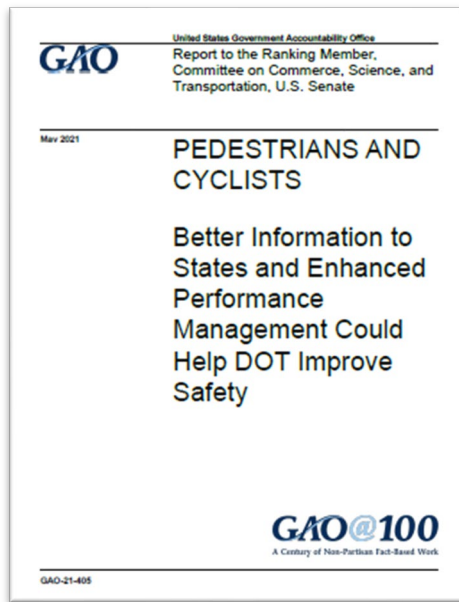
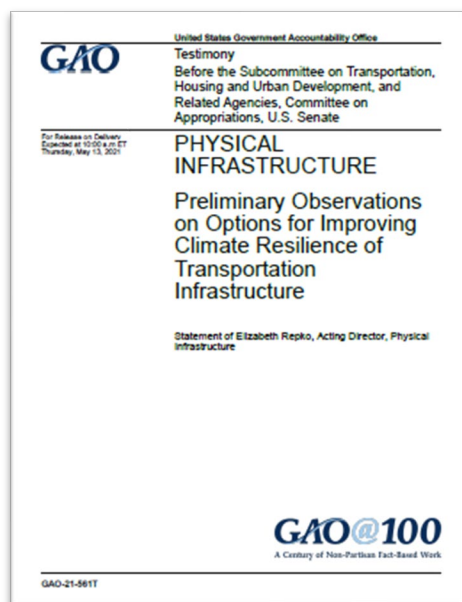
How GAO Conducts its Work

- Investigate programs that receive federal funding or oversight.
- Coordinate with state and local entities.
- Design studies using multi-faceted and innovative methodologies.
- Issue publicly available studies.



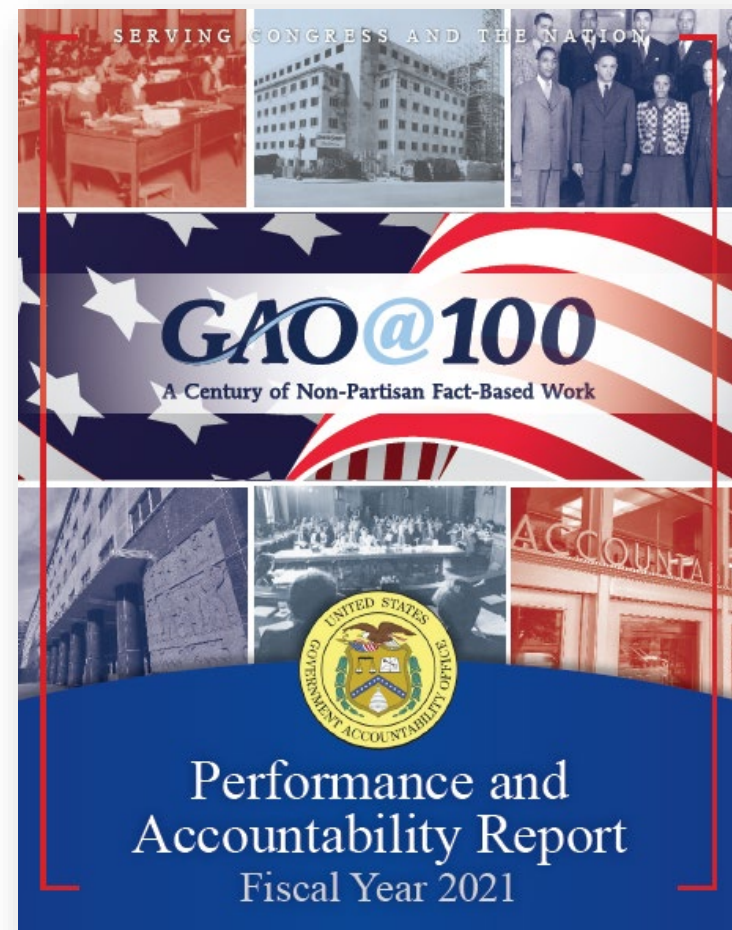
GAO's Surface Transportation Issue Areas

GAO's surface transportation work covers highways, transit, maritime, ports, rail systems, and oil and gas pipelines.



Surface Transportation Results

- Over the past 5 years:
 - ✓ Published more than 60 products.
 - ✓ Issued almost 100 recommendations to Executive Agencies, including 10 priority recommendations.
 - ✓ Recommended 1 Congressional Matter.
- Over the past 10 years:
 - ✓ Claimed more than \$500 million in financial accomplishments.



Funding the Nation's Surface Transportation System

- Funding the nation's surface transportation system has been on GAO's High Risk list since 2007.
- Federal surface transportation spending has consistently exceeded motor fuel and truck-related tax revenue.
- GAO has recommended that Congress consider addressing this imbalance.
- GAO has also identified opportunities to improve performance and accountability in how surface transportation funds are spent.



GAO's Examination of Surface Transportation Funding Alternatives

- GAO examined DOT funded pilot projects.
- Since 2016, 13 states/coalitions have participated. Most tested mileage fee systems.
- FHWA has evaluated programs individually, but hasn't determined how, if at all, state projects might inform a national policy.



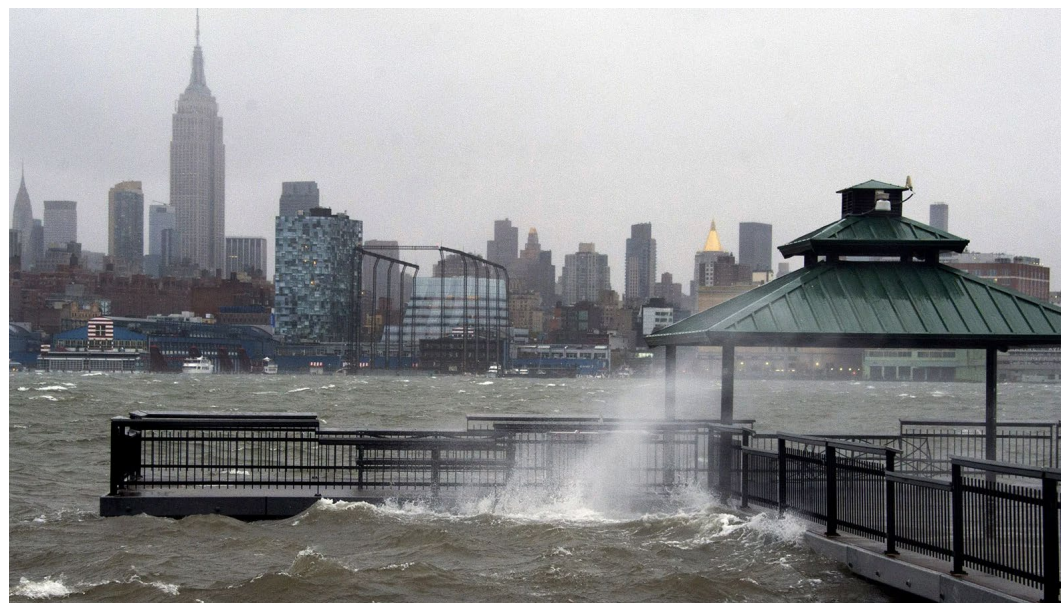
Source: Zakhar Marunov/stock.adobe.com.

GAO's Examination of Discretionary Grants

- GAO has identified risks associated with DOT's discretionary transportation grant programs and made numerous recommendations to improve:
 - ☐ Transparency
 - ☐ Consistency
 - ☐ Documentation
- Without a consistent application review and transparent decision-making process, DOT's discretionary grant program may face challenges about the integrity of its evaluation and selection process.

Case Study on Discretionary Grants

- DOT's Emergency Relief Program provided more than \$10 billion for recovery costs for public transportation systems in response to Hurricane Katrina.
- GAO found that DOT developed a competitive selection process, but did not take steps to (1) ensure the process was consistent or (2) document key decisions.
- GAO recommended that DOT develop department-wide guidance for administering its discretionary grant program to address these and similar findings in other grant programs.



Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

- The IIJA provides \$1.2 trillion, including \$550 billion in new funding, for infrastructure programs.
- More than half (\$284 Billion) of the \$550 billion is allocated for surface transportation projects.
- Among other things, the IIJA supports:
 - ✓ New discretionary grants for transportation
 - ✓ Equity investments in transportation
 - ✓ Climate change mitigation efforts
 - ✓ Charging infrastructure for electric vehicles

Oversight and the IIJA

- Oversight seeks to ensure that government activities:
 - Provide value to the taxpayer;
 - Achieve expected results;
 - Comply with laws and policies.
- IIJA includes oversight activities, such as 35 mandated studies for GAO:
 - 24 in the surface transportation area;
 - Reporting timeframes from 6 months to 6 years.





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