

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN) and Congressman Richard Hanna (R-NY) announced they have introduced bipartisan legislation to give rural areas a greater voice in designing transportation policy and to ensure we invest more equitably in rural America.

“Rural citizens pay taxes just like urban citizens, but often times the voice of rural communities are drowned out when it comes to infrastructure priorities. It is time for rural Minnesotans to have a greater voice in where their transportation dollars are going.” Walz said “The decisions that are made about roads and highways directly impact our local businesses that rely on well-kept infrastructure to receive shipments and move their products to market. As states put together their statewide transportation plans, rural communities should have a seat at the table.”

“When it comes to planning for federal transportation projects, rural communities across the 24th District are left with little to no formal input at the state level,” said Hanna. “This important legislation will provide rural communities with the same level of input at the state planning level as their counterparts from larger population areas.”

H.R. 1565 would require state transportation departments to cooperate with regional transportation planning organizations. Additionally, state transportation departments would be required to disburse some of their federal funding to the rural transportation planning organizations. Walz said this revenue sharing will help ensure that rural transportation planning organizations are full partners in rebuilding America’s crumbling public infrastructure.

This bill is supported by the National Association of Development Organizations, the National Organizations of Counties, the American Planning Organization, and the National League of Cities.