

Good morning, and thank you, Chairman Smith for giving me this opportunity to speak today.

As many of you know, I represent the village of East Palestine, Ohio – the site of the train derailment and subsequent fire and chemical spill on February 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year, which has completely upended the lives of the residents there, through no fault of their own.

I've spent a significant amount of time in East Palestine since the derailment. The national media, for the most part, has left and the story has faded from the national news. But that doesn't mean the problems are solved. Far from it.

I've continued to be there every chance I get, meeting with residents and small business owners. Later this month, I'll be hosting an Energy & Commerce Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Materials Subcommittee field hearing in the village, where we will hear from EPA officials, community leaders, and the railroad regarding what happened, the ongoing cleanup efforts, and actions being taken to address environmental and health concerns.

As you would expect, many residents have taken a financial hit due to this disaster. We in Congress have an opportunity to play a meaningful role in helping them out.

Back in March, I introduced H.R. 1270, a bipartisan piece of legislation called the *East Palestine Tax Relief Act*. Cosponsored by two members of this Committee, this bill ensures those that were thrust into this unfortunate situation will not have to pay taxes on any relief payments they've already rightfully received or will receive in the future relating to the accident. This includes: direct payments from the railroad; any subsidiary, insurer, or agent of Norfolk Southern; or any local, state, or federal agency.

I believe this is the right thing to do.

I urge my colleagues to support the residents of East Palestine by holding a vote on H.R. 1270 in the coming weeks. Thank you.