

Good Morning,

First, I would like to thank the Senate Transportation Committee for holding this hearing and allowing the presentation of public testimony. I am Joe Spanik and am a member of the Board of Commissioners of Beaver County. I am also the Chairman of the Community and Economic Development Committee of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, CCAP. Given the full agenda of speakers and associated time constraints this morning, I will be brief in my remarks, confining them to the subject of this hearing, namely the topic of Resource Challenges and Innovative Changes of the Local Transportation System and how it relates to Counties.

Transportation modes include air, water, land, rail, transit and pipeline; and, as I see it, the fundamental purpose of transportation is to efficiently and safely move goods and/or people via these transportation modes. A properly functioning and integrated transportation network is vital to the economic stability and economic growth of the Commonwealth, its counties and municipalities. Recognizing this, Beaver County, as well as CCAP, recognize that the enactment Act 13 and Act 89, have provided both programs and sources of funds which counties can use in planning and constructing transportation upgrades. As a result of these enactments, funding is available for state roads and bridges, public transportation, local roads and bridges, PA Turnpike expansion projects, multi-modal projects, county bridges, dirt, gravel and low volume roads, recreation and trail planning and construction, GIS etc. The enactment of this type of legislation together with its dedicated funding sources, moves in the direction of CCAP's 2013 policy statement that CCAP supports, in

recognition of the critical role of transportation for our communities, our industries and our quality of life, legislative action on a comprehensive set of durable funding and administrative solutions to Pennsylvania's infrastructure and transit needs. On behalf of Beaver County and CCAP, we applaud the enactment of Act 13 and 89 and recognize the impact that they have on transportation.

Naturally, Federal funding for transportation is available and vital, however, there should be an effort that rises from the states and their respective legislatures that demands similar comprehensive programming and funding at the federal level and not the series of interim stop-gap measures. CCAP's policy is clear that it opposes the use of federal gasoline excise tax, state motor license fund, state liquid fuels funds, or any other dedicated transit tax for a purpose other than that dedicated purpose. Also, CCAP Association supports legislation to address the issue of bridge ownership and offers the following:

- Require the state to assume ownership and control of all bridges on state highways;
- Create a reverse turnback program, similar to that of the road program, for bridges which would include a state funding component;
- Create new funding options and reimbursement for existing bridges under county control;
- Resolve liability issues when bridges intersect with municipal road;
- Revise PennDOT policy to allow covered bridges which are of a historical nature to serve as a tourist attraction to be reconstructed when destroyed; and

- Facilitate PennDOT's guidance on bridges under PUC authority when involved in Rails to Trails projects.

## WHAT IS THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WHEN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT ARE IN COMPETITION WITH OTHER COUNTY NEEDS?

The current Beaver County Comprehensive Plan identifies a number of transportation projects/initiatives. It has further identified primary and secondary targeted economic development districts and projects as guidance for County officials. Transportation and County initiated projects must first be consistent with the Beaver County Comprehensive Plan and must advance the County's general objectives that recognize the Keystone Principles as paramount in its development and redevelopment efforts. As such, assessments of transportation projects and/or transportation components within a larger economic development, redevelopment, or community development project will take into account job creation, private match funding, future tax revenues, community revitalization etc.

## WHAT INNOVATIONS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED BY COUNTIES TO REDUCE COSTS AND/OR IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY?

- Counties are looking into joining the bridge bundling programs with the possibility to save money.
- Right sizing projects based on ADT (average daily traffic) using prefabricated structures when the existing abutments and wingwalls are in good condition or using pipe culverts to replace

existing structures (when possible) utilizing county funds or possibly Act 13 funds.

- Counties may hire additional staff to complete construction projects in-house or develop a competitive maintenance agreement for the repair/maintenance of structures to keep construction costs down.

## HOW HAS ACT 89 BENEFITED COUNTIES?

- Act 89 increased monies for those Counties that did not receive Act 26 funds prior to its implementation. Act 89 allows all counties to receive a sum of money based on bridge deck square footage.
- The counties have an option to assess a \$5.00 vehicle registration tax.
- Counties are looking into joining the bridge bundling programs with the possibility saving on the local match.

This Act created several funds/grants as below:

- A MultiModel Transportation fund comprised of local and public transportation, rail freight, ports and waterways, and aviation, and will focus on efficiency, capital investments, safety and mobility in these modes.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> MultiModel fund stabilizes funding for ports and rail freight, increases aviation investments; establishes dedicated funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements; and allows targeted funding for priority investments in any mode.
- Additional funds for the Dirt and Gravel Road program.

## **WHAT IS THE FUNDING STRUCTURE OF COUNTIES FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS?**

Counties are using several different funding sources to complete projects such as Federal, state, numerous county funds as well as partnering with the private sector to complete projects.

## **WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS TYPICALLY OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY COUNTIES?**

Typically if a bridge/road was built by the County it is owned by the County. Also, in some cases bridges/road owned by locals (city, twp or boroughs) may have requested that the County take ownership due to financial constraints.

## **WHAT UNFUNDED MANDATES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION POST A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE TO COUNTIES?**

Counties are responsible for the maintenance of over 4,000 county owned bridges which need to be inspected every 2-years by federal mandate (of which counties are responsible for 20% of the inspection cost). In addition, posted bridges are inspected more frequently (may be as often as every 6-months). This could be a large portion of the liquid fuels budget leaving a smaller amount of funds for bridge repairs and/or yearly maintenance of structures as well as roadway repairs that are on the increase due to truck traffic.