



**MON YOUGH AREA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**
BUSINESS • COMMUNITY • PROSPERITY

201 Lysle Boulevard
McKeesport, PA 15232

Phone: 412.678.2450

Fax: 412.678.2451

**Senate Transportation Committee
Thursday, May 30, 2013, 11:00
CCAC, Boyce Campus Auditorium
Testimony from Maury Burgwin
President, Mon Yough Area Chamber of Commerce**

Chairman Rafferty, Senator Brewster and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Senate Transportation Committee on the issue of transportation funding through Senate Bill #1 and the Mon Fayette Expressway. I am President of the Mon Yough Area Chamber of Commerce which represents approximately 300 businesses in 36 Mon Valley communities along the Monongahela River from Elizabeth to Homestead.

The Chamber's history dates back over 100 years and we have always been an advocate for the completion of the Mon Fayette Expressway. I am here today to express our support of passage of Senate Bill #1.

As we say in our Mission Statement: *The Mon Yough Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to sustaining and*

expanding the region's prosperity by uniting business and community. This is why we are here today!

We are here to discuss the opportunities that SB #1 presents for the Mon Valley and beyond. In my work with the chamber over the last three years, I have come to know that the people here in the valley are a diligent and hard working breed and that our public servants care deeply about our region's prosperity.

The single most important economic development issue for our region is completion of Mon-Fayette from Route 51 to Interstate 376.

Here is why this project is so important to the economic vitality of the Greater Mon Valley. This project will spur massive new business investment in our Mon Valley by improving access to nine major developable sites along the Monongahela containing over 800 acres of commercial/industrial real estate.

The approved route for the expressway north from RT 51 in Large, PA will provide direct highway access to 1600 manufacturing and related firms that employ over 22,000 people. Some of the notable firms along this route are US Steel Irvin

Works, National Tube and the Clairton Coke Works which is largest coke producer in the United States. Other companies in the region include major suppliers to the resurging gas and oil industries such as Dura Bond and CP Industries, and the largest supplier of Nuclear Propulsion equipment to the Navy, Bechtel Bettis.

With direct access to highways you have companies such as Kennywood who is poised to invest millions of dollars to significantly expand their holdings with a hotel and vastly expanded park attractions. Direct access to the highway would make Kennywood a national destination.

A major underutilized asset unique to our Mon Valley region is the Allegheny County Airport in West Mifflin with its 6500 foot runway. This airport is the seventh busiest airport in Pennsylvania. The number of operations (75,000 takeoffs and landings per year) outpaces several airports that handle commercial or scheduled flights in Pennsylvania.

According to a McComick Taylor technical memorandum 71% of responding firms said they will use the Expressway. 25% of the respondents said they would hire additional employees. According to the SPC the expressway would reduce traffic on

route 51 by 25% and likewise reduce traffic on neighborhood streets by up to 40%.

The expressway also would have multimodal benefits for mass transit. The Mon Fayette can be directly linked to the Martin Luther King Busway giving the citizens of the Mon Valley and Monroeville direct limited access transit into Pittsburgh.

The synergy of our existing rail and river transportation with new highway access would position the Mon Valley for new prosperity, becoming a hub for new business development, jobs and intermodal commerce. This new investment and development would promote community redevelopment in 47 communities.

Transportation funding creates jobs, with engineering and design jobs immediately, leading to both construction jobs and manufacturing jobs throughout the construction supply chain. And, at the end of a project, there is a transportation enhancement that improves the economic competitiveness of the Commonwealth and leads to economic growth and more jobs.

On behalf of Mon Yough Area Chamber of Commerce and the people and communities of the greater Mon Valley, I thank you for the chance to provide this testimony and welcome any questions.