

TESTIMONY BY LINDA McKENNA BOXX
PRESIDENT OF THE ALLEGHENY TRAIL ALLIANCE
TO THE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MAY 30, 2013

1. Support by state and federal funding sources have helped the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage, a trail project that connects Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD, a 35 year, \$80 million project. The commitment and support by the Commonwealth is greatly appreciated and the return on investment is real and robust. We will probably top 1 million visits to the trail this year, with annual direct, trail-side spending of \$50 to \$100 million.

2. There are many future needs for Bicycle/Pedestrian facilities in PA:

Community Connections: trail systems need to include connections to urban centers; otherwise it's like building an interstate highway with no interchanges. Travelers need to access services.

Urban Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities: Pennsylvania needs to make bicycle facilities an integral part of street and highway design. Bike lanes, cycle tracks, bicycle accommodation on public transportation, bike share programs, and bicycle safety programs need to become a priority.

Amtrak: especially on the Capitol Limited, Amtrak needs to provide better accommodations for travelers with bicycles. Bike-based tourism is stymied because Amtrak is dragging its feet on very simple adjustments to allow roll-on/roll-off bicycle service.

Funding for major trail systems: there are many feasible long-distance trail systems in PA that need funding to accomplish what we've accomplished: completion!

Maintenance Funding: Just like the highway system, trail systems need to be maintained, yet there is really no state or federal funding available for maintenance. There could be cost sharing by the project sponsor, perhaps a 50-50 match program. Local municipalities and non-profit organizations are doing the best they can, but, just as there is maintenance support for roads and highways, some support should be made available for trails.

3. LPA Exceptions

If new funding is available, it will probably be administered through PennDOT or DCNR. Trail builders have learned how to abide by the ever-growing list of requirements issued by PennDOT, and many of them have made our trails better. There is one requirement that should be modified. The Landowner Protection Act is a relatively new requirement. It may have merit in some situations, but it is irrelevant for non-profit

project sponsors who do not have the power of eminent domain. I would like to propose that non-profit project sponsors be exempted from the LPA process. It held up our Keystone Metals project by about a half a year, added legal and project management costs, and then increased our construction costs. And the real irony of this was that the landowner was donating the land and we still had to go through a very protracted and irrelevant bureaucratic process.

4. Program Review for Best Practices

If new funding is available, a thorough analysis of past funding, especially PennDOT's TE funding, should be conducted. There are no doubt lessons to be learned that can assure that any new funding is wisely invested.