

**Testimony of Matt Smith  
President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Tuesday, July 17, 2018**

Good morning. I'm Matt Smith and I'm the president of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the advocacy affiliate of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, and a proud supporter of Act 89 during my time as your colleague. I'd like to thank Chairman Rafferty, Democratic Chair Sabatina, Democratic Leader Costa and all members of this committee for the opportunity to testify on the impact of the Act 89 legislation on the economic competitiveness of the Pittsburgh region and the important next steps that are needed to ensure that our region's transportation network remains robust, well-maintained and well-connected.

The business community in southwestern Pennsylvania recognizes that adequate investment in our transportation network is one of the most important issues facing our region's ability to attract investment and jobs. For both urban and rural areas in our region, a robust and well-connected network of roads, bridges, transit, highways, ports, railroads and airports is critical for moving goods to market and people to work. However, before the passage of Act 89 in 2013, decades of underinvestment and an outdated revenue structure had left our transportation system in dire straits.

As the members of this committee know well, bridges were falling into disrepair. Roads and highways were not being resurfaced. Transit systems, including the Port Authority of Allegheny County, were being squeezed. And other modes of transportation – air, rail, locks and dams – were suffering from lack of strategic investment. As a region, we were losing business investment projects and jobs to other competing areas across the nation as a direct result of our transportation and infrastructure challenges.

For these reasons, the Allegheny Conference and the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce joined with business and labor leaders across Pennsylvania to urge action on the passage of a comprehensive transportation funding package that would raise enough revenue to ensure adequate investment in the state's transportation network. Through the hard work and determination of many public and private sector leaders across the state, notably your efforts Mr. Chairman, the General Assembly passed Act 89 in 2013, which invests an additional \$2.4 billion annually in the state's transportation network and provides \$500 million annually for Pennsylvania's transit agencies. This legislation represented a historic accomplishment for the future of southwestern Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth.

I'd like to touch on a few examples of the impact that Act 89 has had on our region's economy since it was signed into law nearly five years ago.

Act 89 has made many excellent projects possible that our region is benefitting from today. Act 89 funding and the state's Rapid Bridge Replacement Program has knocked a structurally deficient bridge list that was as high as 6,000 in 2008 down to 3,000, and 417 of 558 bridges have been completed as part of the Rapid Bridge Replacement Program, bridges like Route 30 over Falls Run in Forest Hills, Bradys Run Road adjacent to Route 51 in Beaver County, and Rolling Meadows Road over Laurel Run outside Waynesburg.

And the Multimodal Fund created by Act 89 has made great community investments possible, from \$100,000 for a bike park along the Great Allegheny Passage in Homestead Borough, to \$1.9 million in upgrades to river cells, dock, and rail at the Colona Transfer facility originally built in the early 1930s in Monaca, to \$1.6 million just awarded this year to create pedestrian connections between the three transit stations in Castle Shannon.

And of course, with public transit needed as the critical backbone of an urban economy, Act 89 allowed the Port Authority to avoid ruinous service cuts and fare increases, and also invest the millions necessary for maintenance and capital projects to keep those services online.

These benefits to our communities and businesses are significant. And they would not have been possible without this Committee's leadership and the passage of Act 89. The Pittsburgh region owes much to the sustainable transporting funding revenue provided by the law. As we recognized at the time of its passage, Act 89 was primarily designed to address the problem of a transportation network that was in critical need of repair. Without it, we couldn't look toward the future unless we were provided the needed investment to maintain our existing transportation and infrastructure assets.

Now, we believe it is a critical time to look toward our next steps. There has been a growing sense of urgency that our region needs to do more to take charge of our transportation future. The Allegheny Conference convened public and private sector leaders and engaged community stakeholders via the Regional Transportation Alliance to develop principles and recommendations that can guide future transportation investments so we stay competitive for business and attractive for residents.

Our work highlighted there is still a lot more to do: we need to optimize our existing assets — transit, roads and other infrastructure — to make the most of everything we already have. Our transportation investments must be flexible and they must be future-proof. The smartest investments are those that can provide us with maximum utility today, but also adapt to future technology trends. And, finally, our transportation network must operate as an integrated system. A deliberate effort to plan, design, build and operate a "system of systems" and work across jurisdictional lines will benefit mobility across the entire region.

Act 89 gives us a model for how big things can get done in Pennsylvania. In this case, business and labor as well as Republicans and Democrats came together to work and support our collective efforts at the time of Act 89 for critical investment in our transportation systems. Act 89 can be the model for how big transformative state policies can cross the finish line.

It is clear that truly transformative investments and changes are possible here. We stand ready to work with our friends in the Labor community and our other Act 89 coalition partners to once again support the state investment we need in transportation. We ask you to continue to collaborate with us as we work to advance ideas to improve transportation and mobility to help us stay competitive and achieve a next-generation economy for all.