

House Transportation Hearing
May 27, 2010
Hershey, Pennsylvania

John M. Becker, P.E.
ACPA Pennsylvania Chapter
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Mr. Majority Chairman, Mr. Minority Chairman and Members of the House Transportation Committee, my name is John Becker, and I am the President of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association. I represent concrete paving and repair contractors, cement manufacturing and other material suppliers, equipment manufacturers, and engineering firms that have a vested interest in the health of the concrete paving industry in the Commonwealth.

The concrete paving industry played an instrumental role in the construction and completion of the Interstate system in Pennsylvania. These roads, which are the backbone of our transportation network and our economy, were constructed mostly with concrete. According to the Federal Highway Administration, 17 percent of our high-type roadways remain as concrete-surfaced pavements. According to PennDOT, approximately 25 percent of these concrete surfaced pavements, which were designed to provide 20 years of service to the travelling public, are over 30 years old! Concrete pavements are still carrying the load for an additional 61 percent of our high-type roadways that have been resurfaced over the years.

Unfortunately, many factors in recent years have conspired to shrink the concrete paving market to a point where our industry is in serious trouble. These factors include: low overall funding levels for transportation, a priority on bridge work, lower priority on large paving projects with long service lives, an emphasis on network ride quality and much less so on asset management, and policies that generally do not allow consideration of concrete alternatives to milling and resurfacing. One billion dollars in stimulus funds that could have been used for longer-term improvements to our highway network and would have helped our industry have mainly been used for bridge work and short-term fixes and have generally had little impact on our industry.

The combined concrete and cement industries employ almost 39,000 individuals across the Commonwealth. These industries and the equipment manufacturers, the steel industry and numerous others that provide materials and services for concrete paving in Pennsylvania, have been badly affected by these factors and the current economic crisis. Many of these companies have been forced to lay off significant portions of their work forces. Without immediate action, the Commonwealth risks the loss of the concrete paving industry, which will result in loss of competition for pavement construction, an increased dependence on asphalt pavements, and higher prices that are associated with less competition.

Our industry continues to advocate for the need for long-term investment strategies for our highway infrastructure. We also understand that the public demands accountability. Alternate bidding has been used on a very limited basis and there is still much work to be done so that full advantage can be taken by PennDOT of this method. We believe that Life Cycle Cost Analyses (LCCA), which is an integral part of this bidding process, should use real data and real cycle times, and that LCCA inputs and outputs are posted on-line so that more of the pavement decision-making process is transparent and that all can be assured that highway investments are used most efficiently.

The concrete paving industry supports a long-term solution to the transportation funding crisis by closing the \$3.5 billion gap as is being advocated by the highway construction industries and the Keystone Coalition. We would actively support any funding mechanisms that would facilitate dollars being invested in long-term paving and other infrastructure solutions.

I thank you for your time and would be happy to answer any questions.