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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE'S TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Written Testimony From the Pennsylvania Asphalt Pavement Association (PAPA)

Mr. Chairman, I am Gary L. Hoffman, the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Asphalt Pavement Association (PAPA). PAPA is a non-profit trade association representing about 130 companies that comprise the preponderance of the asphalt paving industry across Pennsylvania. Two of the primary goals of the Association are to “ensure best quality asphalt products and pavements” and “maintain cooperative relationships and communications with owner agencies.” PAPA’s membership consists of asphalt mix producers, paving contractors, asphalt liquid binder suppliers, construction equipment manufacturers and design engineers and architects.

PAPA member companies combined employ over ten thousand workers both union and non-union directly or indirectly. Asphalt mix producers have almost two-hundred plant locations across Pennsylvania with at least one in all but a hand full of counties. And, asphalt pavement preservation and rehabilitation activities take place all over that state on more than 117,000 miles of state and locally owned roads in Pennsylvania.

Good quality, smooth roads are important to Pennsylvanians. They are important because they are safe, vital to our quality of life, reduce vehicle operation and maintenance costs and are necessary to spur economic competitiveness and vitality. A recent survey of Pennsylvania motorists indicates that safety and congestion are their two most important highway issues.

According to a report released just last year by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), roadway conditions contributed in over half of the more than 42,000 motorists killed and nearly 40% of the non-fatal injuries that occurred in motor vehicle crashes in 2006. Pennsylvania ranked fourth highest in the nation with a comprehensive cost of crashes in 2006 of \$10.4 B, where road conditions contributed to the frequency and severity of vehicle crashes.

Good roads contribute to the quality of life of every Pennsylvanian; every day. They afford us a way to get to and from work opportunities, schools, grocery marts, sporting events, etc... both safely and timely. They provide for fast and widespread distribution of the goods and services upon which we have come to depend. They provide for rapid emergency response that saves lives and prevents otherwise greater losses. The fact that there were 107 B vehicle miles travelled in PA in 2008 shows how vital the highway system is to Pennsylvanians.

Pennsylvania rides on usASPHALT

And, the smoothness of pavements matters - A LOT! Full-scale field studies by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) at the Wes Track pavement test track in Nebraska showed that trucks running on a slightly smoother pavement had a 4.5% reduced fuel consumption. At today's prices, an average driver could save \$150 per year! Not only do smooth pavements reduce fuel consumption, they also reduce vehicle operating costs and driver fatigue by minimizing tire bounce and load impacts. Figures developed by The Road Information Program (TRIP) report "Rough Roads Ahead" indicate that the average Pennsylvanian pays \$346 a year on vehicle wear and tear because of rough roads.

A safe, smooth and free-flowing highway network is a key to economic revitalization. A road system that provides accessibility and dependability is one of the primary factors that the industry uses to site new locations. Pennsylvanian's location in the northeast corridor is strategic for both major north-south and east-west commerce and goods movement. That strategic location needs to be capitalized upon with a good highway system within the state.

The Pennsylvania DOT has made dramatic improvements over the past 15 years in the overall smoothness of all road networks - from Interstates to "farm to market". The International Roughness Index (IRI) is a standard test used by about 40 states to rate road conditions. The test measures accumulated up and down movement of a vehicle (inches/mile) in response to rough pavement. This measure is essentially what a motorist feels in the seat of their pants while driving on a bumpy road. The FHWA has compiled these data from all states to create an assessment of pavement conditions, rating the roads as poor, mediocre, fair or good. While PennDOT has improved the ride quality of the Interstate from 150 inches/mile in the early 1990's to about 85 today (like golf, lower number is better), the FHWA report indicates that 44% of PennDOT's approximately 40,000 miles of road are in the poor and mediocre categories. This compared to the national average of 33% for these two lowest categories of ride quality. And, because of PennDOT's "herculean" effort to address the structurally deficient bridges over the last few years, the longer-term rate of improvement in overall pavement ride quality has leveled off and begun to turn back the wrong way. First of all, good roads must be kept good. To quote a national transportation leader, "you can spend too much time and money chasing after potholes while watching the rest of the system fall apart" said PennDOT Secretary of Transportation Allen Biehler.

Mr. Chairman, because of the nature of our industry, men and women (Pennsylvanians) can be put to work all over the state as pavement infrastructure improvement projects are awarded. These are good paying, rewarding jobs that cannot be "shipped" overseas. A survey of PAPA members noted that there is nearly a one to one correlation between percent increase or decrease in program funding and percent change in the workforce (jobs saved and jobs created). We have the capacity and capability to build high quality pavements that will benefit Pennsylvanians right now and into the future.

For all of the above reasons, PAPA strongly supports a comprehensive funding solution - a solution that addresses the needs of all transportation modes, a solution that is predictable and sustainable long term.