

House Transportation Hearing  
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Lock Haven, Pennsylvania

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Pennsylvania

Good afternoon. I am John McCaskie, Chief Engineer of Swank Associated Companies and a member of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association. Although we are based in Westmoreland County we currently are doing work in this part of the State. My company provides Pennsylvanians more than 300 good paying jobs as skilled equipment operators, truck drivers, mechanics and more. Our business is to maintain and preserve highway and airport concrete pavements and bridge decks through restoration and safety improvement processes such as saw-cut grooving, patching and joint sealing.

The effects of the recession on the citizens of the Commonwealth and the concrete paving industry have been dramatic. Stimulus spending over the past year has allowed some in the bridge building and road preservation segments of our industry to hold on to their jobs and benefits. Many others, however, have not been as fortunate. Furthermore, with much of the stimulus work now behind us and with great uncertainty as to the future of transportation funding at both the state and national levels, our entire industry faces a crisis that may include massive layoffs and deferred capital investments, which will, in turn, further slow Pennsylvania's economic recovery. This lack of certainty directly affects our ability to operate with confidence and assure our workers, as well as the companies that we do business with, of a future that they can count on.

What we need is a reliable, dedicated stream of funding for transportation infrastructure investments. The lack of reliable or even predictable transportation funding results in a market where, in slow economic times, contractors cannot justify making the investments in equipment and personnel that will allow them to be competitive and responsive to agency needs when bursts of funding, like the recent stimulus package, are released.

As you know, the current gap between transportation infrastructure needs and available funds has been estimated at \$3.5 billion. It is essential to Pennsylvania's economic development, both now and in the future, that this gap be closed immediately! My company joins many others in the concrete paving and repair industries in calling for the development and implementation of a long-term solution that will close this \$3.5 billion funding gap, and we will actively support any strategy that includes sound and permanent funding mechanisms to do so. Possible mechanisms include, but are not limited to, increases in user fees and registration fees, the use of public-private partnerships, and any other funding mechanisms that are equitable and will provide reliable and sufficient funding to support the necessary long-term investments in our transportation infrastructure.

On a final note, I have worked as an engineer in the Pennsylvania highway construction industry for over 40 years and have witnessed many changes over this period. Amid budget cutbacks, I have become more and more aware of the difficulties that the Commonwealth faces in developing and implementing newer, but proven, technologies. With a reliable solution to our long-term transportation funding crisis, Pennsylvania can again become a leader in this field, and again be in a much better position to take advantage of newer, more cost-effective paving technologies, such as thin, medium, and thick concrete overlays, permeable concrete, full-depth reclamation, and roller compacted concrete.

I appreciate having the opportunity to speak with you and welcome any questions that you may have now or at any time in the future.

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