



PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

**TESTIMONY BY  
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS**

**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION, HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY,  
AND HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEES**

**CONCERNING  
TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

**PRESENTED BY  
TIM L. HORNER  
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT**

**JUNE 1, 2010**

**HARRISBURG, PA**

4855 Woodland Drive ■ Enola, PA 17025-1291 ■ Internet: [www.psats.org](http://www.psats.org)

PSATS ■ Pennsylvania Township News ■ Telephone: (717) 763-0930 ■ Fax: (717) 763-9732

Trustees Insurance Fund ■ Unemployment Compensation Group Trust ■ Telephone: (800) 382-1268 ■ Fax: (717) 730-0209

Chairman Markosek and members of the House Transportation Committee and the House Democratic and Republican Policy Committees:

Good afternoon. My name is Tim L. Horner, township supervisor for Chapman Township, Clinton County and the Second Vice President for the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. With me is Elam M. Herr, assistant executive director for the Association.

Today we will provide examples of local transportation needs in PennDOT Districts 2 and 3. We provided the committees with a statewide perspective at the May 27 hearing. Should anyone need a copy, we would be happy to provide it.

### **PennDOT District 2**

In 2008, municipalities in District 2 spent \$53.9 million on local roads and bridges, yet only received \$15.8 million in liquid fuels funds. Many municipalities in this region are dealing with significant amounts of heavy truck traffic associated with Marcellus Shale drilling activities.

My township, **Chapman Twp, Clinton County** has several urgent projects that we simply cannot fund. Our small township of 991 people has a bridge that provides access over a railroad to the local high school and elementary school. This bridge has wearing surface problems and needs joint repair and guiderail replacement. Under current conditions, it is nearly impossible for the township to raise the \$100,000 needed to properly complete this project. However, the issues with this bridge need to be addressed before the situation worsens.

Chapman Township has a road that goes from the township building to the top of a mountain. Due to its location, the road has been hit hard by the winter cycle, as well as the logging trucks traveling this road. To properly repair the road would cost about \$300,000, which the township doesn't have, so the road will continue to deteriorate.

Our township worked with the state and county a few years ago to eliminate a county-owned bridge. A new road was constructed to provide access to the affected properties, helping to save millions that otherwise would have been used to replace the bridge.

Our township receives about \$40,000 in liquid fuels funding annually, which is not enough to take care of critical routine maintenance on our roads. Due to lack of resources, our township has had to defer replacement of piping for many of our roads. In addition, several of our roads are taking a beating from the Marcellus Shale play.

**Patton Township, Centre County** is a growth area and a retail destination in the Centre Region. However, the township's roadways are currently operating at full capacity and the township has recognized a substantial need to address its transportation infrastructure. Waddle Road has been identified as Patton Township's top transportation priority.

Waddle Road serves as a connector route between the mixed-use, residential Toftrees development and North Atherton Street, the main business route into the Borough of State

College. As development continues to occur, and multiple projects are in the planning stage or under construction, the Waddle Road interchange at Exit 71 of US 322/I-99 cannot safely or efficiently handle projected traffic volumes. The Waddle Road bridge is classified by PennDOT as functionally obsolete due to its low vertical clearance above US 322/I-99.

To safely and efficiently accommodate the current and projected traffic in the area, Patton Township is undertaking a \$16.9 million project to replace the current bridge with a wider structure containing four lanes and two dedicated turning lanes to access the highway ramps, as well as bike and pedestrian lanes. Also, additional lanes will be constructed on US 322/I-99 to eliminate traffic stacking on the highway.

Patton Township is committed to the proposed improvements and is aggressively working to obtain a combination of federal, state, and local funding sources, including a public/private partnership with the Patton Development Company. The Waddle Road interchange is the highest priority project not on the Centre County MPO's current-four year TIP, however construction funds are not expected to be available until 2023.

### **PennDOT District 3**

In 2008, municipalities in PennDOT District 3 spent nearly \$65 million to maintain their roadways, yet received only \$21.1 million in liquid fuels funds. The municipalities in this district are particularly hard hit by the natural gas drilling activities within the Marcellus Shale region.

**Athens Township, Bradford County** has two projects that are in dire need of funding. The first is an old railroad bridge that was turned into a one-lane bridge for vehicle traffic many years ago and now needs very expensive repairs. This bridge connects the northern portions of Sayre Borough and the northeast portion of Athens Township and the southern tier of New York state and provides access to the rail yards, which have the potential for industrial development, and the hospital's shuttle parking facilities. The bridge is used by tractor trailers and dump trucks to bypass downtown Sayre Borough. This year the township is replacing purlins under a portion of the steel deck through an Agility agreement with PennDOT and is attempting to place the bridge on the TIP program. Without a funding source, the township may be forced to close the bridge.

Athens Township also has the Valley Business Park Road C project, for which the township has already raised about \$3.5 million from federal, state, and ARC funds. The business park is located at Interstate 86 (*New York Route 17*) and PA State Route 220 and houses two manufacturing facilities, as well as a training facility for a major natural gas drilling company. About half of the business park is available for development, but has lost potential businesses because the site lacks the connector road needed to provide essential access to the site. The township is in the final design phase, but needs \$2.5 million soon or the project will not move forward.

**Ward Township, Tioga County** has two four-foot sluice pipes that washed out during the February melt along a roadway that provides key access for emergency vehicles. DEP regulations require that the pipes be replaced with much larger, and longer, pipes that cost approximately \$8,000. However, the township cannot afford to replace the pipe without

neglecting other critical road maintenance needs, including the replacement of all the metal pipes in the township, and faces the prospect of closing this road. The township does have an Agility agreement for grading and snow plowing and wants to keep its roads, all of which are gravel, in sufficient condition to qualify for liquid fuels funds while dealing with truck traffic from Marcellus Shale drilling and a nearby windmill project.

### **Local share of transportation funding**

PSATS believes that the commonwealth must maintain a predictable and reliable funding method for state and local roads. As such, PSATS supports a blend of revenue enhancements, including realigning the cap on the oil franchise tax, tying Pennsylvania's registration fee structure to the consumer price index, adjusting the gas tax, and increased use of public private partnerships, to fund the state and local highway and bridge systems. We urge that any and all solutions include the following components: at least a 20 percent local share, depositing all proceeds into a restricted use account, and linking any tax or fees to the consumer price index.

### **Decrease mandates**

There are several actions that the General Assembly can take that would significantly decrease the cost of maintaining their transportation infrastructure. These actions include:

- Provide relief from the Prevailing Wage Act by revising the act's criteria to return to the historical exemption for paving and similar maintenance activities while retaining coverage for new construction if state dollars are used.
- Require PennDOT to increase the maximum amounts for road bonding.
- Increase the required advertising and bidding amounts from \$10,000 to at least \$25,000, and index it to inflation.
- Require PennDOT to maintain its storm drainage facilities on state highways.

In closing, transportation funding for state and local highways and mass transit needs to be carefully examined and acted on now. Unless action is taken soon, our transportation system will crumble, driving economic opportunities away.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the committee today. We will now attempt to answer any questions that you may have.