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Testimony submitted by Margaret A. Howarth, Executive Director  
Monroe County Transportation Authority  
IN SUPPORT OF continuing funding under Act 44,  
Before the Pennsylvania House Transportation Committee  
June 3, 2010

Good morning Chairman Markosek and distinguished members of the Committee.

My name is Peggy Howarth and I serve Monroe County in the capacity of Executive Director for their public transportation system.

I am here today on behalf of our growing community, especially those who rely on public transportation directly and indirectly.

Monroe County is 608.5 square miles in size and has a population of approximately 165,000. Our population has increased 20% since 2000, placing an increased demand on improving our roads, bridges, and public transportation system.

I would like to share some statistics which demonstrate the critical need for continued funding:

1. Ridership of our system has increased 53% overall since 2000.
2. Our bus service no longer relies on 35 buses but 50 buses on a daily basis. These buses are used in Fixed Route and Paratransit services.
3. Last year we provided 393,725 trips

I'd like to put a face on the people relying on public transit in Monroe County:

1. 62,918 trips were provided to seniors last year. Although many were for social interaction such as attending one of our four main Senior Centers, some also use public transportation to get to/from schools and shopping. We have also been able to expand our Paratransit services to include the neighboring Lehigh Valley and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton regions. Our riders travel to kidney dialysis (there is a need for in and out of county services), the Veterans Hospitals in Allentown and Wilkes-Barre, prosthetic rehabilitation, dental services and more.
2. Nearly 5,000 trips are provided to persons enrolled in our Worker's Express Program. This program of statewide significance helps low income families temporarily get transportation to/from work and day care while they work toward becoming self-reliant.
3. 6,278 trips were for Persons with Disabilities, a program referred to as being of 'Statewide Significance'. Individuals primarily travel for medical reasons,

however, a growing number (more than 28% of our riders) use this service to get to/from work.

4. Additionally, 135,000 trips were taken strictly to get people to/from work, citing no specific subsidy.
5. 82 people are employed by the Monroe County Transportation Authority with 50 full-time employees receiving healthcare benefits. Although not riders of the system, these are families within our community relying on continued services of public transportation.

Funding for public transportation in Monroe does the following:

1. Reduces congestion on three of our primary roadways: Route 209, 611 and 196.
2. Safely provides mobility for more than 1,000 riders daily.
3. Allows us to coordinate and group riders from various human service agencies, reducing costs.

In closing, I hope these statistics demonstrate the benefits of Act 44 and the importance of continued transit funding.

Thank-you.