



News for Immediate Release

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Governor Rendell Calls for Funding Solutions to Keep Travelers Safe

Transportation Funding Crisis Demands Legislative Action Now

Harrisburg – Governor Edward G. Rendell today called on the General Assembly to join him in developing a plan to adequately fund Pennsylvania’s transportation systems. Significantly more money is necessary, he said, to maintain the safety of highways and bridges, to improve Pennsylvania’s economic competitiveness, and to create jobs.

With Pennsylvania already facing a backlog of critically needed repairs, Governor Rendell said the state must address the problem now to avoid saddling future generations with crumbling transportation infrastructure that will cost much more to repair in the future.

“Businesses want to locate in states where they can move their goods to market efficiently and safely. And there is no dispute that building a quality workforce is intimately connected to the quality of the transportation system,” Governor Rendell told a joint session of the House and Senate at the start of a Special Session on Transportation Funding.

The rejection last month, by the Federal Highway Administration, of Pennsylvania’s application to generate transportation funding via tolls on Interstate 80 creates an immediate need for \$472 million in next year’s budget and a \$60 billion hole over the life of Act 44, the 2007 transportation funding law that was enacted with widespread bipartisan support. It called for tolling I-80 as well as annual toll increases on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

“I have not called this Special Session to repeal Act 44, because the Act modernized the way road and transit projects are funded,” the Governor said, and outlined options for legislators to consider:

First, they could find a way to plug that half-a-billion dollar hole for this year and perhaps next year too, and put off addressing the long-term problem.

Second, they could solve the entire Act 44 funding problem for the 46-year life of the law, so the capital improvements envisioned in Act 44 would occur. He pointed out, however, that the real statewide problem is even greater than Act 44 would have solved.

"The third option is for us to work together to put sufficient revenues on the table now, to fully repair and improve our transportation system at the level that is truly needed," he said, noting the Transportation Advisory Committee report released yesterday recommends an additional \$3.5 billion in annual funds to maintain existing state and local highway and bridge systems, and public transit.

"This approach will require courage, but in my mind, it's the only solution that will have a lasting legacy for generations to come.

"The third option ensures that we will maintain a fully functioning and well-maintained transportation system, so that those who follow us will not be faced with the same problems in the years to come," Governor Rendell said. "Just as our parents and their parents paid the cost of building our roads, bridges and transit systems, we should foot the bill to keep them in good working order for ourselves, our children, and for our children's children."

The fourth option, the Governor said, would be for legislators to take no action to address the problem.

"That would be totally unacceptable to me and a disaster for our state. It would cripple our transportation network, making us less competitive, diminish the quality of life of our citizens, and imperil public safety."

Despite additional investments in recent years, Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of structurally deficient bridges – 5,646. That is more than the total number of structurally deficient bridges from Virginia to Maine combined. There are more than 7,000 miles of state roads in poor condition.

Governor Rendell also stressed the immediate economic benefits that significant new transportation funding would produce. Work on highways and bridges would directly create thousands of jobs, and more would result from the in-state production of steel, concrete, asphalt, and employment in other construction-related industries.

"Working together, I am confident that we can ensure a better future for Pennsylvania and once again make history by giving our commonwealth the most modern and efficient transportation network in the nation," Governor Rendell concluded.

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Editor's Note: A copy of Governor Rendell's speech and additional information about Pennsylvania's transportation funding crisis is available at:

www.FundPaTransportationNow.com.

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