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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

DATE: February 17, 2012
TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Frank Dermody
Democratic Leader
SUBJECT: Proposed Legislation to rename the PA Department of Transportation

It has been seven months since Gov. Corbett's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission issued its recommendations for raising a substantial share of the money needed to meet the dire need for repair, maintenance and replacement of state highways and bridges and for operating subsidies of Pennsylvania's several dozen mass transit systems. For seven months, the Governor has ignored the report of his own commission. Our constituents are tired of waiting for him to show leadership on this issue.

I plan to introduce legislation that would rename the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation as the Department of Deferred Maintenance. As with past instances when state agencies were renamed, the bill would require the department to use up any remaining "PennDOT" materials before printing stationery, signs and publications with the department's new name. I acknowledge that this bill might be seen as a symbolic gesture. Some might even call it frivolous. What I consider frivolous – even dangerous – is the current course of prolonged inaction on an urgent issue that threatens the lives and economic livelihoods of Pennsylvanians. The situation needs the governor's immediate attention.

The introduction of a bill to rename PennDOT would serve an important purpose in highlighting that Gov. Corbett's inaction on transportation funding has effectively changed the mission of the Department. This proud state agency has been praised in the past for its active stewardship of the Commonwealth's transportation assets and planning to meet future needs, but the current multibillion-dollar shortfall has forced upon it a much more limited triage role of only partially responding to a multitude of urgent needs across all 67 counties. While I have full respect for the Secretary and the work done by thousands of dedicated PennDOT public servants under the most difficult circumstances, I believe that changing the name to Department of Deferred Maintenance is appropriate and reflects a situation the Governor created by his failure to lead.

Please inform Maryann Eckhart in my office at 787-3566 or meckhart@pahouse.net if you would like to co-sponsor this bill.