

PENNSYLVANIA

LEAGUE OF CITIES

POST OFFICE BOX 5196
2608 NORTH THIRD STREET
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TELEPHONE: (AREA CODE 717) 236-9469

Member National League of Cities

TESTIMONY OF
JOHN A. GARNER, JR., ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
before the
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
on
TURN-BACK OF STATE ROADS
HOUSE BILL 527
MAY 21, 1981

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MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE,
MY NAME IS JOHN A. GARNER, JR., ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE PENNSYLVANIA
LEAGUE OF CITIES. I THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO
TESTIFY ON THE "TURN-BACK OF STATE ROADS" CONCEPT.

THE PENNSYLVANIA LEAGUE OF CITIES SUPPORT THE RETURN OF CLASS
6 STATE ROADS WITH THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONS:

(1) THAT THE PROGRAM BE VOLUNTARY. WHILE THE STATE MAINTAINS
THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM THROUGH "USER TAXES", MUNICIPALITIES MUST
RELY ON LOCAL PROPERTY AND WAGE TAX REVENUES TO SUPPLEMENT THE
COSTS OF MAINTAINING LOCAL ROADS IN EXCESS OF THE SUBSIDY RECEIVED
FROM THE STATE THROUGH THE LIQUID FUELS TAX PROGRAM. MUNICIPALITIES
SHOULD NOT BE FORCED TO ACCEPT STATE ROADS, ESPECIALLY WITHOUT
ADEQUATE STATE FUNDING TO MAINTAIN THEM.

(2) THAT THE ROADS TO BE TURNED BACK BE UPGRADED TO THE MUTUAL AGREEMENT OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

(3) THAT THE AMOUNT OF STATE SUBSIDY PER MILE OF ROAD RETURNED BE NEGOTIATED BY THE MUNICIPALITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S REPRESENTATIVE; AND THAT SUCH PROGRAM AND ACCOMPANYING PAYMENTS BE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT FROM THE CURRENT LIQUID FUELS TAX PROGRAM.

WHILE THE NUMBER OF CLASS 6 ROADS AVAILABLE TO BE TURNED BACK TO CITIES IS SMALL COMPARED TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES (UNDER 100 MILES), THE COST FOR CITIES TO MAINTAIN THEIR SHARE OF THE LOCAL ROAD SYSTEM IS MUCH GREATER. BASED ON THE REPORT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ECONOMY LEAGUE, 1979, STUDY OF RETURN OF STATE HIGHWAYS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, THE MEDIAN THREE YEAR COSTS FOR MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL ROADS FOR THOSE CITIES SURVEYED EXCEEDED \$10,000 PER MILE! A RECENT COMPILATION OF THE COST OF MAINTAINING LOCAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS PREPARED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF BOROUGHES, INDICATES THE AVERAGE COST PER MILE FOR MAINTAINING CITY ROADS EXCEEDS \$20,000 PER MILE (SEE ATTACHMENT #1).

(4) THE RETURN OF STATE MAINTAINED BRIDGES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNDER A SEPARATE PROGRAM. THE COST, MAINTENANCE, REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF THESE BRIDGES INVOLVE ISSUES COMPLETELY SEPARATE FROM THOSE INVOLVED WITH MAINTENANCE OF ROADS.

(5) MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE TRANSFER OF LOCAL ROADS TO THE STATE.

COMPARING LEAGUE POLICY TO THE PROVISIONS OF HOUSE BILL 527, P.N. 554, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

(1) THE PROGRAM PROPOSED BY HOUSE BILL 527 IS NOT VOLUNTARY. I KNOW OF NO MUNICIPALITY WHICH HAS HAD GOOD EXPERIENCE WITH BINDING ARBITRATION UNDER ACT 111. IT IS PERHAPS THE WORST APPROACH TO NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS. AT THIS TIME, WE OPPOSE INCLUSION OF AN ARBITRATION PROVISION IN A TURN-BACK PROGRAM.

(2) THE ANNUAL FUNDING PER MILE OF \$2,500 IS TOO LOW! WE BELIEVE THIS FIGURE SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED.

FINALLY, PERMIT ME TO POINT OUT TO THE COMMITTEE THAT THE LOCAL SHARE OF THE LIQUID FUELS TAX REVENUE COLLECTED HAS BEEN DECREASING FROM 21.33% IN 1970, 18.82% IN 1974, AND TO 15.24% IN 1979. MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD NOT BE ASKED TO ACCEPT ADDITIONAL STATE ROADS INTO THE LOCAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE STATE RETURNS THE LOCAL SUBSIDY FROM THE LIQUID FUELS TAX PROGRAM TO 20% OF THE REVENUES COLLECTED PER YEAR.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR COMMENTS ON THE "TURN-BACK OF STATE ROADS" CONCEPT.

THE COST OF MAINTAINING LOCAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

	State Highway Aid ¹	Local Operation and Maintenance Expenditure	Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditure ¹	Total Road Miles ²	Average Cost per mile
Cities	\$18,587,698	\$107,283,471	\$125,871,159	6,177	\$20,377
Boroughs	15,750,094	43,639,592	59,389,686	8,193	7,249
First Class Townships	8,247,748	20,932,780	29,389,686	4,391	6,693
Second Class Townships	43,629,186	47,137,172	90,766,358	46,542	1,950

Sources:

- 1 1977 Local Government Financial Statistics Report, Department of Community Affairs
(latest figures available)
- 2 1977 figure, Bureau of Municipal Services, Department of Transportation

Note: Capital expenditures not included.