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Torrey A. Babson

Torrey Babson brings strong analytical and legislative experience to GSP's Economic Architecture practice with his Capitol Hill background and combined with his graduate research into economic development factors. Babson served on the staffs of U.S. Congressmen representing Illinois and Virginia. Babson handled legislative issues pertaining to federal appropriations, energy, transportation, and environment. Babson also has experience in community development at the Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, and currently sits on the Green Jobs Advisory Board of the 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board.

While at GSP Consulting, Babson has helped both the State of Minnesota and the Pittsburgh region determine their green jobs market, as well as designed steps to take advantage of green opportunities. He has been involved in numerous smart-growth, transportation, and green technology projects, and is currently assisting the Techbelt Initiative – a multi state economic development venture aimed at better connecting the economies of the Pittsburgh-Cleveland Corridor with a special focus toward energy and life science.

Babson holds a B.A. from Wheaton College and an M.S. from Carnegie Mellon University.

About GSP Consulting Corp.

GSP enables the growth of organizations, companies, communities, and economies through a suite of innovative government, business, and economic development consulting services.

GSP Economic Architecture, a division of GSP Consulting, takes a unique approach by working collaboratively with clients to create, implement and assess programs to ensure long-term viability and success. Through unique national experience, the Economic Architecture team assists the growth of state and local economies with innovative economic strategies. The array of services to governments and organizations focus on:

- Tech-based Strategy Formulation
- Incubator/Infrastructure Development
- Economic Impact Analysis
- Strategic Blueprints
- Industry Sector and Organizational Development
- Entrepreneurial Development
- Regional Asset Mapping

Extensive market research is the starting point for GSP's Economic Architecture strategies. Our diverse team has served on the front-lines of economic development and has pioneered **groundbreaking initiatives.**

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**Testimony
Before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Committee on
Transportation– MAGLEV
November 6, 2009**

Presented By

**Torrey A. Babson
GSP Consulting Corp.**

Honorable members of the Pennsylvania House Committee on Transportation, thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak before you regarding the Magnetic Levitation ground transportation project; otherwise known as MAGLEV. GSP Consulting has a wide variety of experience in transportation impacting, smart growth, economic development, and green economic strategies. The GSP team has a deep understanding of the national high speed ground transportation policy debate, dating back to the first Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in 1991.

The introduction of a high-speed MAGLEV system would support regional and state goals of decreasing environmental impacts, logistical transportation improvement, and economic expansion. MAGLEV will better integrate current residents and industries and also lead to the attraction of new residents and business opportunities.

MAGLEV represents a major shift towards “smart growth” development by providing more consistent and timely transit options. Unfortunately, large scale businesses often open new facilities in lower density areas. This can disproportionately impact certain segments of the population, especially lower-income, lower-skilled workers who need jobs and job experience the most. These individuals often face limited transportation options due to travel times and routes that limit employment availability and thus economic mobility.

The reliance upon automobiles as often the sole means of transportation also has significant costs. The residents of the region face economic pressures due to congestion, and the dependence upon foreign oil. These include several monetarily measured cost including fuel costs, parking, and productivity loss.

MAGLEV counters these harms in several ways. First, it would spur the development of green jobs. The Pittsburgh region has current and projected capacity for numerous green jobs, especially with an older and retiring workforce. These positions are not just environmental scientist and biodiesel engineers, but also include welders, structural metal fabricators, construction workers, and a whole

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host of others who assist with green projects. While all the jobs they work on may not have a direct environmental benefit, it is important to note that everyone can have a hand in helping to create a greener economy. Projects such as MAGLEV will help to draw in more interest to filling the pipeline of many blue collar jobs with green benefits. Signature projects such as MAGLEV, combined with top-notch union and community college apprentice and training programs, can go a long way toward positioning the region to supply its own workforce needs, spurring its own economic growth.

The Introduction of the MAGLEV would find Pittsburgh at the cutting-edge of US high speed transportation technologies. This would not only benefit current residents, but attract people and businesses to the region, and likely lead to new technologies and business opportunities being spun out of the original project. Companies such as HP are a perfect example of a firm positioning itself with regional strengths to grow a new technology that has national implications.

MAGLEV would have a significant impact on the region's air quality and environmental sustainability. MAGLEV operations have a significantly smaller carbon footprint than current transportation alternatives. It produces virtually no noise, source emissions and its land-use impact is the least intrusive transportation choice

The integration of high-speed ground transportation systems such as Maglev would significantly improve the region's air quality. In 2007, the American Lung Foundation found Pittsburgh to have the country's second worst air quality. Pittsburgh's ozone pollution levels were significantly affected by automobile emissions. MAGLEV would significant reduce Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Nitrous Oxide (NOx) and Co₂ emissions due to a reduction in daily vehicle travel. Just a 10% decrease in commuter traffic from Westmoreland County to Pittsburgh would see an average annual reduction of over 84,000 lbs of CO₂ emitted into the atmosphere.

Finally, the proposed route connecting Greensburg to the Pittsburgh International Airport has a limited negative effect on environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife populations. Due to the elevated tracks and beams of varying lengths MAGLEV will avoid environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., wetlands, natural habits, and streams). Additionally, natural migration habitats for the region's wildlife will be undisturbed.

The time has come to move past the study and debate phases, and begin the full scale construction and operation of these systems in the United States. Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania can once again lead the Country in a new transportation technology.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak before you and urge your support for the MAGLEV project.

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