

TESTIMONY OF  
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PENNSYLVANIA RAIL FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
JUNE 10, 2010

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Rail Freight Advisory Committee, I wish to thank Majority Chairman Markosek and Minority Chairman Geist for holding these vital hearings regarding the crisis in Pennsylvania transportation funding and for allowing me on behalf of the PA Rail Freight Advisory Committee to submit this testimony today.

The Pennsylvania Rail Freight Advisory Committee's mission is to provide the Legislature advice and recommendations on matters affecting the vital rail freight industry including funding in Pennsylvania.

It has become obvious that Pennsylvania transportation needs far outweigh the funding levels that have been provided and therefore as an answer to your first formal question we believe a financial crisis does exist.

Pennsylvania highway and rail infrastructure are the arteries and veins of the Commonwealth's economy. As they become deficient because of overuse and insufficient funding to expand capacity the entire State's economy and all of its industries suffer.

Evidence of the need for additional funding is demonstrated annually by the more than double or triple amounts of state rail freight funding that is requested through good applications to PennDOT's Bureau of Rail Freight that cannot be funded because of lack of funding. The jobs created and new industries that have moved into Pennsylvania or expanded are directly related to these Bureau of Rail Freight grants have been well documented over the years.

Inaction is not an acceptable solution for creating job growth and attracting new industrial development in Pennsylvania. It has been demonstrated and documented that increasing the funding levels of the State's RTAP funding and the RFAP funding which have been increased in recent years produce immediate jobs and economic growth in the Commonwealth. We highly recommend and request that the Governor and the Legislature continue their policy of increasing these funding levels of the RFAP and RTAP due to the immediate and significant economic benefits that they have provided the Commonwealth.

The last issue of how to solve the funding crisis is obviously the most controversial and difficult. Of course there are no silver bullets or quick solutions but surely a comprehensive approach with all options on the table is needed. Pennsylvania's crumbling highway infrastructure is the most pressing segment of the overall problem. It has been proven that each loaded railcar has the ability to take four to five trucks off our overcrowded highway infrastructure. This produces the dual benefits of reducing

highway congestion and reducing wear and tear on our highway infrastructure. This dual benefit along with the fact that the rail mode can move one ton of freight 436 miles on one gallon of diesel fuel emphasizes how directly helpful the rail mode can be in helping to solve the Commonwealth's freight infrastructure problems.

We again wish to thank you for your diligence in holding these hearings around the Commonwealth and we would like to reserve the ability to provide additional comments and recommendations to you throughout the course of the budget process.