

Testimony of
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President and Co-Owner
Wright Knox Motor Lines, Inc.

To
House Transportation Committee
Chairman, Joseph F. Markosek
Minority Chairman, Rick Geist

Thursday, July 17, 2010
Clarion University, Hart Chapel Auditorium,
850 Wood Street
Clarion PA

Good Afternoon. My name is Gladys W. Knox, President and Co-Owner of Wright Knox Motor Lines, Inc. located Armagh, PA Penn DOT District 10. We are a 2nd generation family owned trucking company in business since 1982. We employ 70 people and run a coast to coast operation. Our sales are approximately \$8.5 Million. Our company transports tires for Specialty Tires of American located in Indiana PA, windows for Gorell Doors and Windows, also located in Indiana, PA and tungsten, tools and mining bits, and interplant and customer based service for Kennametal, Inc. based in Latrobe PA. We are also a long-standing member of PMTA and support many of the same issues.

Chairman Markosek and Chairman Geist, on behalf of Wright Knox Motor Lines, Inc, I thank you and your Committee for the opportunity to present testimony concerning Pennsylvania's transportation system.

It is important to all Pennsylvania citizens to operate on a safe, efficient transportation system. And it is evident to most of the motoring public that our system needs major repair and updating to continue meeting economic growth and the basic needs of our citizens.

There are several bridges, underpasses and frequent accident areas within a short distance of our office that need attention. With safety of paramount importance in the transportation industry, we routinely travel extra miles as we adjust our routes to avoid areas of extreme congestion, restricted bridges and underpasses, and high accident corridors. (Examples: State Route 56 in Pleasantville most recently the scene of a fatal 5 vehicle accident, State Route 56 – improperly banked “S” curve 1 ½ mile west of

Armagh and ½ mile before United High and Elementary Schools routinely sees several accidents annually.)

And while we choose to be safe, it is still costly to our operation. The newer environmentally designed engines only get an average of 6.5 miles per gallon when governed at 65 mph, a speed below many of the states in which we travel. The 2 highest expenses in our industry are fuel and drivers, closely followed by maintenance of our original equipment (an investment which has risen 46% in the past 10 years). For example, out of route miles to avoid Pleasantville Mountain costs approximately \$84,845. based on \$2.946 per gallon fuel. Extra miles, congestion and waiting for accidents to be cleared all add time to the driver's day. Drivers' hours of operation are set by DOT and may not be altered. The result is one of 2 scenarios: A: Reduced income for the drivers, reduced number of loads transported, less revenue to our company and less service to our shippers or B: Additional drivers, more trucks on the highway and increased cost of goods and services to our shippers, which in the end flows to our citizens.

And while we can say we believe it is important to Pennsylvania to maintain a structurally sound transportation system and action must be taken in the immediate future, we also realize that maintaining and expanding our system is costly; funds are limited and for many projects, non-existent. But inaction will result in continued decay, reduced economic growth, increased safety hazards, more accidents and increased loss of life; all unacceptable consequences. Therefore it is the responsibility of our legislature to ensure funds to adequately maintain our transportation system for our future economic growth and personal development of our citizens. Without action to

avert the funding crisis, goods and service delivered by transportation companies such as ourselves, and used by our citizens will fall into jeopardy.

In reference to cost of needed improvements, I will not assume that the needs of District 10 are greater than any other District; we travel in all PA Districts, so the total infrastructure is important us and the trucking industry. The most recent Transportation Funding Study indicates an unfunded annual need of \$3 Billion for highway and transit. Funds are needed now. They must be fairly accessed and equitable to all stakeholders. Funds must be easy to collect. It may be advisable to use a source with a collection system currently in place. Sources include lifting the artificial cap on wholesale cost of fuel, increasing fuel taxes, reducing the disparity between gas and diesel, or some combination of other current revenue generators.

Long term funding strategies also need to be developed. However, until that occurs, our company believes all Pennsylvania residents use our transportation system in some form or manner and have the responsibility to help our transportation system by paying their fair share.

Mr. Chairman, as a member of the trucking industry, we look forward to working with the Legislature and Administration to develop and support a reasonable and equitable highway funding solution that is fair and impartial for all the Commonwealth's citizens.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.