

We appreciate the House Transportation Committee and Policy Committees for holding this hearing and allowing the Clarion region to voice some of their concerns with the Commonwealth's transportation future. You are correct that inaction is not acceptable. The path that Act 44 has taken the legislature over the past three years is equally unacceptable. Since July 2007 legislative leaders in Harrisburg have known that the plan to toll I-80 most-likely did not meet federal guidelines for converting Interstate 80 to a tolled facility. Despite previous rejections of Pennsylvania's application for tolling authority and a vocal majority of citizens in the Commonwealth opposing the tolling plan, the legislature and Governor pushed on.

The tolling tunnel vision that consumed Harrisburg was never more present than when Governor Rendell repeatedly told the press that there was "No plan B". In fact, Mr. Chairman on March 10th you confirmed this for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, claiming "Act 44 of 2007, which included the I-80 tolls, was plan B."

While these events might be in the past and hindsight is undoubtedly 20/20, the good people of Clarion were steadfast in their opposition to the plan from the beginning.

I must commend the Committee and its leadership, Mr. Markosek and Mr. Geist for listening to the citizens today. These hearings are important because for the first time, the people of Clarion will have a voice that may count for something.

In August 2007, we met with Pennsylvania Turnpike CEO, Joe Brimmeir. In November 2007 we met with PTC and in December 2007 with the PTC and Chairman Markosek. Again, two subsequent meetings occurred with Chairman Markosek in December of 2008 and November of 2009. At each of these meetings we were very clear in our explanation and concerns with tolling and how it affected the corridor of I-80. We are also very clear in our understanding that legally, the proposal would not meet the letter of the law. In December 2008, we addressed alternatives to the toll plan.

In the November 2007 meetings that the PTC held, we ask that you tell us what the impact of tolling I-80 would have on the corridor. Promises were made that studies would be done? Yet, we did not ever see any studies.

It took a group of concerned citizens to commission an independent study that resulted in showing the adverse affect on not only the I-80 corridor, but the entire Commonwealth. .

A 2006 report was released by the Governor's Transportation Funding & Reform Commission The first thing the report recommended was for the legislature to look at spending before taking steps to raise revenue.. I -80 was not an option addressed in the report.

Most of the arguments you have are that the cost of maintaining I-80 should be paid for by the truck traffic traveling on the highway. The people and the truckers themselves have been telling

you they do pay for the roads in the form of fees and taxes. That money comes back to the Commonwealth by estimates ranging from \$130-\$240 million. With maintenance costs of around \$80 million dollars annually, those fees are recovered.

I bring a simple message to the committee today. We must examine how highway funds are actually being allocated. Recent media accounts have shown the remorse by SEPTA and PAT over the federal rejection of I-80 tolling. Obviously the tolling was directly going to these systems to help fund them. All I ask is that we as a Commonwealth put forth a transparent process and truly separate the Highway from the Transit accounts. While this is done with state dollars, the Rendell Administration has flexed federal funds in the amount of \$412 million between 2004-2007. The legislature should reign in the powers of the executive to ensure that valuable highway dollars are not going to subsidize transit costs.

Do not get me wrong. The Commonwealth needs transit, without it the economy would slow, but the legislature must find ways of making transit sustainable. Additionally, full and transparent revenue sources and expenses should be delineated in this year's budget.

Other ideas will be presented by others, but I hope that lawmakers will consider that they need to repeal ACT 44. As long as Act 44 is still law, there will be a problem meeting it's funding obligations.

Mr. Chairman, if I can leave you with one message today – it is the message that I-80 tolling should no longer be part of the equation. The region has spoken, the federal government has spoken on numerous occasions. A regional band-aid is not a commonwealth-wide solution.

As citizens we elect our legislators to lead. While gaining information is crucial to solving our transportation funding shortfalls, the burden of coming up with those solutions ultimately rests on the elected official. Afterall, that's in the job description.

Thank you.