



County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania *The Voice of Pennsylvania's Counties*

2013 County Government Priorities

Funding and Modernization Solutions for Transportation and Infrastructure

The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) continues to stress the interrelatedness and interdependence of state, county and municipal transportation systems. A comprehensive set of solutions to transportation infrastructure, mass transit, and intermodal transportation needs is critical to the continued economic viability and quality of life in the commonwealth. Without adequate transportation systems, we cannot get children to school, citizens to work or goods to market.

In 2011, Governor Corbett assembled his Transportation Funding Advisory Commission (TFAC) to develop funding solutions to meet the needs of the state's infrastructure and transit systems. The TFAC recommendations include uncapping the Oil Franchise Tax, indexing all vehicle and driver fees to the Consumer Price Index, shifting State Police costs to the state's general fund, restructuring Act 44 and funding mass transit from revenue raised through the existing state sales tax. In conjunction with government, industry, transit and other partners, CCAP extends its support to consideration of these funding alternatives, including the recommendations that appropriate allocations need to be made to county and municipal government.

The TFAC assessment of the commonwealth's infrastructure and mass transit needs comports with those outlined in the 2007 Report of the Governor's Transportation Funding and Reform Commission, which were themselves affirmed and updated by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in 2010. In December 2011, the TAC released its comprehensive report, *Financial Needs of Counties and Municipalities for Highways and Bridges*. Combined with further needs assessments developed by CCAP and other local government and professional groups, as well as PennDOT updates to bridge inspection reports, these reports form the basis of counties' support of ongoing and comprehensive solutions to this critical issue.

Counties' most critical infrastructure need is for county bridges. Counties are responsible for the maintenance of more than 4,000 county-owned bridges, funded with a gas tax allocation that, until Act 44, had remained largely unchanged since 1930. With a lack of infrastructure funding, many of these bridges are structurally deficient and many others are approaching the end of their useful life. While county bridge failures have not achieved the publicity of major interstate bridge collapses across the country over the past decade, counties' ongoing inspections of their spans show that more than \$100 million per year is needed in capital costs alone. Current bridge funding allocations from county liquid fuels and Act 44 funds amount to about \$40 million. Counties continue to support a half-cent increase in the state's liquid fuels tax, or an equivalent amount from another transportation funding source, that would be allocated to counties based on each county's relative bridge responsibility.

Mass transit funding issues are also significant to counties, which support more than 30 fixed-route mass transit systems covering more than two-thirds of the counties, as well as demand-response shared ride or free ride systems throughout Pennsylvania. Because of the differing access to mass transit among the counties, and the differing coverage and administrative structures among the mass transit systems, the Association does not have a unified position on mass transit. Nonetheless, counties have a significant interest in resolving the problems in mass transit, and have been supportive of the funding and administrative solutions of Act 44 and the recommendations in the TFAC and TAC reports.

The Association also supports reasonable alternatives directed at reducing construction costs and expediting local project delivery, such as concurrent engineering and environmental reviews, common engineering and design standards, and utilizing prebuilt structural components such as precast concrete trusses and culverts. PennDOT has begun to take steps in this direction

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through its next generation initiative that will explore a variety of modernization efforts, including expedited permitting and project consolidation. Other examples include a 2012 PennDOT modular bridge pilot program that allows for the use of pre-approved, pre-manufactured, commonly engineered components and for PennDOT to develop multi-bridge replacement contracts. Further, Act 88 of 2012 will allow the state, as well as municipal authorities, to enter into contracts for transportation projects that transfer the rights for use or control of transportation facilities to public or private development entities.

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