

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARING

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
ROOM 140, MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2018
10:00 A.M.

BEFORE :

HONORABLE STANLEY SAYLOR, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE JOSEPH MARKOSEK, MINORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE KAREN BOBACK
HONORABLE SHERYL DELOZIER
HONORABLE GEORGE DUNBAR
HONORABLE GARTH EVERETT
HONORABLE KEITH GREINER
HONORABLE SETH GROVE
HONORABLE DOYLE HEFFLEY
HONORABLE SUE HELM
HONORABLE LEE JAMES
HONORABLE WARREN KAMPF
HONORABLE FRED KELLER
HONORABLE JASON ORTITAY
HONORABLE MIKE PEIFER
HONORABLE MARGUERITE QUINN
HONORABLE CURT SONNEY
HONORABLE KEVIN BOYLE
HONORABLE TIM BRIGGS
HONORABLE DONNA BULLOCK
HONORABLE MARY JO DALEY
HONORABLE MADELEINE DEAN
HONORABLE MARIA DONATUCCI
HONORABLE PATTY KIM
HONORABLE STEPHEN KINSEY

*Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

1 BEFORE: *(Continued)*

2 HONORABLE LEANNE KRUEGER-BRANEKY
3 HONORABLE MIKE O'BRIEN
4 HONORABLE PETER SCHWEYER

5 NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

6 HONORABLE JOHN TAYLOR
7 HONORABLE MIKE SCHLOSSBERG
8 HONORABLE BILL KORTZ
9 HONORABLE ED NEILSON
10 HONORABLE PERRY WARREN
11 HONORABLE MIKE CARROLL

12 COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:

13 DAVID DONLEY
14 REPUBLICAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
15 RITCHIE LAFEVER
16 REPUBLICAN DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
17 MIRIAM FOX
18 DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
19 TARA TREES
20 DEMOCRATIC CHIEF COUNSEL

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TESTIFIERS

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NAME

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LESLIE RICHARDS
SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.....5

SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

* * *

(See submitted written testimony and handouts online.)

P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: (Portion of
4 audio/video missing.) -- here listening to the
5 testimony this morning of the Secretary, as we move
6 forward, who are not on the Committee, we have:
7 Representative Kortz, Representative Schlossberg and
8 Representative Neilson, who is our troublemaker,
9 although he did pull my -- Madam Secretary, he
10 pulled my chair out today. I think he wants
11 transportation dollars.

12 Also, we have Representative
13 Donna Oberlander, as well.

14 I did want to -- just a personal note
15 today -- congratulate the Women's U.S. Hockey Team
16 for winning gold last night. So I'm proud of our
17 women who are doing very well in the Olympics.

18 Anyway, I want to thank you, Madam
19 Secretary, for coming today. Highway is of an
20 interest to every legislator, just as education is.
21 So if you don't mind, if you would stand and raise
22 your right hand, we'll swear you in. And we'll move
23 right to your testimony.

24 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony
25 you are about to give is true to the best of your

1 information, knowledge and belief; if so, say I do.

2 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I do.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Thank you,
4 Madam Secretary. And thank you for your time today.

5 We'll start off with our first
6 questioner, Representative Ortitay -- Joe, any
7 comments?

8 I should ask Joe first.

9 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Thank you,
10 Chairman.

11 I think Representative Neilson took your
12 wallet when he helped you with your chair.

13 Good morning, Secretary.

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Good morning.

15 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: You'll be
16 interested to know that we have traffic lights here
17 now in the room.

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I did notice the
19 signalization. Very nice.

20 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: They
21 actually work --

22 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I like the red,
23 yellow and green.

24 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: They
25 actually work very, very well. The members have

1 been very, very good, and I give the Chair a lot of
2 credit for installing such a very efficient system.

3 So hint, hint to all the members, how
4 well, you know, these work. And he will remind you
5 that they're also for the testifiers, as well. But
6 nevertheless, we're really glad that you're here.

7 I have some questions later, if we have
8 time, but I just wanted to welcome you. You're
9 doing a great job.

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

11 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Keep it up.

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you. Good to
13 see you.

14

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
16 Ortitay.

17 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 Good morning, Madam Secretary.

20 A couple different areas I want to cover,
21 but I'm going to start with the Turnpike and the
22 southern beltway update since that entire portion is
23 in my district from end to end. Just wondering if
24 that's still on time, on budget, if we're still
25 looking good for 2020.

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, we are. I
2 mean, we're moving ahead with it. Obviously, it's a
3 very important part of what's happening out west on
4 the Turnpike. It continues to move ahead.
5 Obviously, we'll give you updates.

6 You know, that's two years away and a lot
7 needs to happen, but as of today, things are moving
8 forward.

9 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Yeah, I've seen
10 a lot of the construction. I drove through a lot of
11 my district last weekend and saw a lot of the
12 clearing that's going on down there. Just to give
13 you a heads-up, we've had a lot of issues out there
14 with flooding and constituent issues with the
15 Turnpike itself.

16 We haven't exactly had the best
17 relationship back and forth. I would ask for your
18 assistance in that. I know my office is --

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Absolutely.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: -- reaching out
21 to them today and was working with them yesterday.

22 But I would ask if we could have a
23 meeting offline some time to discuss it a little
24 further.

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Absolutely. The one

1 thing that has changed since I was before you last
2 year is that I'm now the Chair of the Turnpike and
3 so that's, you know, I'm able to do that even better
4 than I was able to do that before. And I'm happy to
5 meet with you one-on-one and arrange any meeting
6 with any Turnpike officials, as well.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Even better.
8 Thank you. I appreciate that.

9 On to another topic here, how many
10 PennDOT districts are there?

11 I know we have 12 numbers, but how many,
12 actually, are there?

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: There are 11. There
14 is no PennDOT District 7.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Okay.

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: That's like the
17 mystery, but there are -- they are numbered through
18 12, but the 7 is missing. It's kind of become
19 central office.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Okay. Lucky
21 number 7.

22 And what I'm trying to get at is, is 11
23 the magic number?

24 What's the rationale for having 11
25 districts across the State?

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. Eleven is
2 working quite well. That decision was made, you
3 know, not in this administration, several
4 administrations ago. And so each district has a
5 District Executive. Each District Executive has
6 three Assistant District Executives, one in
7 Maintenance, one in Construction, one in Design.

8 I shouldn't say each one. District 6
9 which has a very heavy volume, has an extra. And
10 then each county -- or sometimes in some of the more
11 rural counties, they're grouped together -- there's
12 a County Maintenance Office, so that's the basic
13 structure.

14 So there's, you know, there's the office
15 that administers everything, but they're really on
16 the ground. They're the ones that are, you know,
17 dealing with the constituents, dealing with their
18 municipalities, dealing with our communities that
19 host our assets, going out there and dealing with
20 the design, construction and maintenance issues.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Have you looked,
22 or have any plans of looking, at possibly a more
23 efficient model that, you know, with today's
24 technology -- I know this decision was made years
25 ago -- that makes it easier for a more centralized

1 approach that's more consistent?

2 I know I deal with two different PennDOT
3 districts with my House seat, and they operate very
4 differently at times. And it can be very confusing
5 for me and my constituents.

6 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, we're trying
7 to make that more consistent across the district.
8 Each district does tend to get its own character in
9 how it deals and sometimes that's a really good
10 thing because each area is very different, as you
11 can imagine, but we definitely, you know, want to
12 make that as easy as possible.

13 We do have a Central Office that does
14 take into account where we have economies of scale,
15 where we can handle things from one central office
16 and then divvy it out, but it's very important to
17 have people working in areas that are familiar with
18 those areas, and most often, more than not, live in
19 those areas, as well.

20 So we're not looking at that right now,
21 but if you have anything that you'd like us to take
22 a look at, we're always looking for ways to improve
23 our services.

24 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Okay. I just
25 wanted to bring that up. I do have a bill in the

1 Transportation Committee. It's basically a study to
2 see if there's anything that we can do on the
3 consolidation end of the actual physical offices
4 themselves, not so much the maintenance sheds and
5 storage sheds, thing like that, because I know that,
6 obviously, they have so much land to cover, but I
7 was looking at it in more of a -- you know, we had
8 talked about consistency, maybe with the use of
9 technology, lowering costs and making things move a
10 little bit faster and efficiently.

11 I know with the special funds hearings,
12 we talked about getting permits and just working
13 across the different districts because it can be
14 time consuming and labor intensive at times, but I
15 just wanted to throw that part out there to see if
16 you guys had looked at it. And again, I'm happy to
17 have this conversation with you further as we move
18 on.

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, I would like
20 to, as well. A lot of stuff is centralized, like
21 our IT, things that make sense --

22 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Right.

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- that are real
24 easy to do, but you know, we'll take a look. And
25 obviously, if there are other things that we can

1 improve -- I will tell you I'm very comfortable with
2 how it's operating right now with the 11 districts,
3 especially during our winter operations, which is a
4 big part of what we do and how we, you know, share
5 personnel and equipment and make sure that
6 everything is where it needs to be.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: And in full
8 disclosure, I have one located right in my district
9 anyway, so I'm happy with it there. I'm just
10 looking at trying to figure out ways that we can
11 improve government --

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Right.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: -- streamline
14 it, just one idea that I had.

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: Appreciate your
17 responses.

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Okay.

19 REPRESENTATIVE ORTITAY: That's all I
20 have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Thank you, Madam Secretary.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
23 Donatucci.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman.

1 It's good to see you today.

2 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Nice to see you, as
3 well.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: I have
5 misplaced my question over here.

6 All right. So as you know, autonomous
7 vehicles are permitted on Pennsylvania's roadways as
8 long as there's a driver sitting in the car. This
9 technology is currently only being used by a small
10 amount of testers, TNCs, and some of the car
11 companies that are testing them, but it's only a
12 matter of time before these vehicles really start
13 appearing.

14 I know they need mapping. There's a big
15 mapping war going on. That's so important, to know
16 where closures are and what's happening.

17 So what proactive steps is PennDOT taking
18 to prepare for the expansion of the autonomous
19 vehicles on our roadways?

20 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. We're
21 extremely active. I sit on the ITS America Board.
22 There is only a handful of DOT Secretaries that sit
23 on that. Pennsylvania is seen as a national leader,
24 so I'm very proud of that.

25 I truly believe --and I might get to this

1 later -- we are always trying to decrease the number
2 of fatal accidents; as well as serious accidents.
3 And with 94 percent of our fatal accidents in 2016,
4 which is the last year that we have records for;
5 we're looking at 2017 right now -- 94 percent of
6 those fatalities were attributed to human
7 distraction.

8 So autonomous vehicles and connected
9 vehicle technology is going to allow us to decrease
10 that number even further. I often say, not since
11 the seat belt and the airbag have we had this
12 opportunity. And the technology is coming, you
13 know. Whether we, you know -- even if I said, I
14 don't want to look at it at all, it's still coming.
15 So we want to be prepared.

16 So we have a team at PennDOT. In fact, I
17 just newly positioned someone, a special assistant
18 to me, Roger Cohen, who is undertaking just
19 autonomous and connected vehicle technology. Also,
20 Mark Kopko, in our Highway Maintenance Division
21 right now, has really taken a national lead.

22 And so we're looking at a variety of
23 things. We're looking at our connected signals.
24 We're looking not just at what's going on in
25 Pittsburgh -- a lot of people know of the autonomous

1 vehicle testing that's going on out there, the
2 different businesses that have located out there.

3 We're also one of 10 proving grounds. We
4 applied for that in the last Federal administration
5 and we were thrilled to get one of the 10 that were
6 available. That's up in the State College area.
7 And so we're working with Penn State right now.

8 We're looking at how autonomous vehicles
9 and connected vehicle technology can help us with
10 crash trucks in our work zones. We're looking at
11 how it can help with emergency service providers and
12 allowing them to do their lifesaving work.

13 We're looking at how it can help transit.
14 We are testing with a bus system out west where we
15 are putting units inside the buses so that when they
16 are running late on schedule -- not always, but when
17 they are running late -- signals will give them the
18 green light to allow them to get through so that
19 they can run on time, so that the people who, you
20 know, rely on transit to get around can do that.

21 We're working with Carnegie Mellon.
22 We're working with U-PENN, with the University
23 Transportation Centers, where they're helping us
24 with this technology. I go out and I speak at other
25 States. I speak in the region, as well. So we're

1 very active. I want to remain active in this area.

2 Again, I think it's very important. I
3 want Pennsylvania to continue to be a leader. I am
4 thrilled that we are.

5 I just want to finish my comments with
6 saying we were rewarded for our efforts. There's
7 one national award that's given by the President of
8 AASHTO, and that's the Association of State
9 Transportation Officials, so every State DOT is a
10 member.

11 And we were given the President's Award
12 this past year for our Autonomous Vehicle Policy
13 Task Force. Where we are ahead, we are educating
14 legislators, getting them on board, letting them
15 know and getting them comfortable, because I know
16 this technology can be scary if you haven't seen it,
17 if you haven't, you know, watched it and touched it,
18 it can be an unknown. So we want everyone to have
19 the information that they need.

20 So we look forward to working with you,
21 and we were also putting together our first-ever
22 strategic plan. And our second annual ever
23 Autonomous Vehicle Summit will be held in Pittsburgh
24 in the first week of April.

25 Our last one was held in State College

1 last October and we had hundreds of people. I mean,
2 it was more successful than we thought. People want
3 to talk about it. We want to talk about everything,
4 about safety aspects, as well as work force issues,
5 technology, cyber security, everything that comes
6 along with it.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Okay. And
8 since my light is still green, from your perspective
9 as the Transportation Secretary, what immediate
10 transportation challenges does Pennsylvania face?

11 And what actions can the General Assembly
12 do to address the challenges?

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. Two of the
14 biggest challenges we're going to have coming up,
15 and I'm happy to talk more about it, obviously, you
16 know, the Act 44-Act 89 issue with the Turnpike, the
17 transit funding, PennDOT's funding, it needs to be
18 solved.

19 And while I always thought this, but now
20 as Chair of the Turnpike, it is really, you know,
21 I'm becoming more involved in the details of the
22 Turnpike and it's not on a sustainable course,
23 right?

24 And we have to keep raising tolls. And
25 while we do have good ratings by the credit agencies

1 right now and things are good, we're seen as a good
2 investment, you know, in a few years, people are not
3 going to want to spend, you know, \$65 to go from one
4 end of the Turnpike to the other and that's where
5 we're headed in order to keep this.

6 So that funding issue is big, and then
7 the Real ID issue. We have a very strong plan in
8 place. And I am happy, again, to go into more
9 details of what we're doing, but we're going to need
10 everybody's help in educating constituents to make
11 it easy for them and to know what documents are
12 needed, where they need to go, how to get that type
13 of an ID if they need it.

14 Our drivers license centers are already
15 at full capacity, as many of you know. That's one
16 of the calls we get most. And so we'll need your
17 help in dealing with that.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: With that, I
19 call on Representative Heffley.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Secretary Richards, just a follow-up.
23 And I actually have two parts to my questioning.

24 This past week, I had to get my license
25 renewed and I waited about two and a half hours.

1 And I've got to tell you, it was somewhat
2 embarrassing sitting in there. I mean, people know
3 who I am and they're coming up to me saying, can't
4 you do something about this?

5 And I'm sitting there; if I could, I
6 would. I just -- and the reason is, I have a CDL,
7 so I had to take some identification and go through
8 that process. There were probably about maybe 15 or
9 20 other individuals that were renewing their CDL.
10 It just takes a very long time.

11 With Real ID coming, it's going to be a
12 nightmare. And also, with getting your physical
13 card submitted, the wait times to get that back,
14 drivers are losing work because they're waiting,
15 it's not getting processed through PennDOT fast
16 enough. We try to help them out through our office,
17 but is there any plan in place to -- I mean, this
18 didn't happen overnight. We knew this was coming.

19 And if there's no plan for that, you
20 know, what are you going to do with Real ID?

21 Because I mean, right now, it is taking
22 two and a half hours to get a license renewed. With
23 Real ID, it could be two days.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, in certain
25 areas, it is a huge challenge. We have 71 drivers

1 license centers. We have almost 10 million licenses
2 of people who have to, every four years, get a new
3 license. And in some centers, we've been very
4 successful. We've been able to add -- we complement
5 and we've been able to add positions and hours where
6 it's possible, but in many of our centers, we are
7 already at full capacity. Every counter is taken.
8 There's no room to add, or we're fully staffed.

9 And we have Qmatic, which is an IT
10 system, in all of our drivers license centers,
11 except for 20. That gives you your ticket when you
12 walk in. So even if the wait is longer, at least
13 you know how long that is and that takes a little of
14 the frustration off.

15 I will say, we have gotten to an average
16 of 30 minutes or less overall, and that's a huge
17 improvement from where we were when I came into this
18 position, but we continue to work on it. And that's
19 why the Real ID challenge is so difficult because
20 it's not like we can say, oh, okay, these extra
21 people who need IDs, we have time for it.

22 Part of it also is, in Pennsylvania,
23 people are used to getting their license over the
24 counter. That's something that other States don't
25 do. It's a service that we provide that you can

1 walk in and leave with your license.

2 And Real ID, we are going to also allow
3 you to walk in with your documents and get your
4 license mailed back to you, but the regular license
5 is going to continue where you get it when you walk
6 in.

7 So I'm, again, happy to sit down with
8 you. I know those are some of the ways that we are
9 dealing with it. I agree with you, a
10 two-and-a-half-hour wait is way too long. We don't
11 want to see that, and we understand how frustrating
12 that can be.

13 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: Right now, with
14 a rural county like Carbon County, there's only --
15 we only have one day a week that we can go there.
16 And I think just increasing it to two days could
17 really cut down, or even a day and a half, in
18 looking at those opportunities.

19 But I wanted to get to my next line of
20 questions, and I don't have a lot of this five
21 minutes here. And I wanted to ask about the Federal
22 5311 funds that are mass transit for rural counties.

23 In looking over the sheets, as to where
24 this money has been going over the last few years,
25 it seems like one particular county has been

1 receiving a lot of it. There's \$4.7 million that's
2 set up for Appalachia, for counties in Appalachia.
3 That's 52 counties, but yet, all of that \$4.7
4 million, for the last three years, has gone to Erie
5 County. And the urban mass transit systems can pull
6 from other Federal dollars.

7 And I just, I'm wondering why such a
8 large amount of this money that's designed for
9 rural, that's Federal dollars to go to rural
10 communities for transit, is going to more of an
11 urban area. And I would also like to see if we
12 could get a project-by-project breakdown of these
13 5311 funds and where they're going.

14 I mean, I notice Carbon County, where I
15 represent, hasn't gotten any of this money. And I'm
16 wondering why we're using -- we're directing this
17 money to urban areas rather than using it as it's
18 designed for, for rural areas, because there are
19 separate pots of money for urban areas.

20 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So the 5311, we have
21 \$27 million that's given out. Some of it is to
22 training, a small part of it. Some of it is -- a
23 lot of it goes to inner city, I think at least 15, a
24 minimum of 15 percent, and inner city buses.

25 And then there's the Appalachian pot.

1 Erie qualifies for that because they service, you
2 know, Venango, and some very rural areas get
3 serviced from there.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: But to get all
5 of that money, like all the Appalachia money,
6 \$4.7 million for the last three years, so none of
7 the other 52 counties got any of that money.

8 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So well, the
9 Appalachian money -- we'll look into that. The
10 Appalachian money is reserved for areas that service
11 the Appalachian communities, and Erie is definitely
12 one. And it's a large project that will have a huge
13 impact in the region.

14 We can get you that breakdown, and you
15 know, we can look at the others, but it's a good use
16 of that money. I was actually just up there touring
17 it and --

18 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: But they got \$14
19 million last year, so they got all of the Appalachia
20 money, plus \$10 million other -- but there are also
21 a lot of other areas in the State that could use
22 that.

23 I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Very good.

25 Representative Dean.

1 REPRESENTATIVE DEAN: Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3 Good morning, Secretary.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Good morning.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DEAN: Great to see you.
6 We always appreciate you coming in and telling us
7 your challenges and our opportunities.

8 I had three areas that I'm interested in,
9 so maybe I'll just drop them in your lap so that we
10 use up the time as well as possible. Number one is
11 the issue of safety, and I know you care deeply
12 about that. It's probably your number one issue
13 that keeps you awake at night, safety not just for
14 those who travel the roads, but also safety for
15 those who work on the roads.

16 And it is with great sympathy that I say
17 we're very sorry for the recent death we experienced
18 and for that gentleman's family. So I would like to
19 ask you about safety. Number two, I, too, am
20 interested in the proposal for \$100 million for new
21 funding for rural roads and bridges.

22 What are the particular different
23 challenges there?

24 And how can that money be best used?

25 And the third piece, which you and I

1 always talk about, which is multimodal. Certainly,
2 I care about it for bikes and trails, but it is so
3 much greater than that, having to do with our ports
4 and public transportation and everything else.

5 So those are my three areas, and I'd ask
6 you to let us know what we need to know.

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

8 Chairman, if I might just ask for a
9 minute to be added to this answer because I do want
10 to say something. The safety piece, of course, is
11 important. It's important in everything that we do.

12 You know, unfortunately -- normally,
13 before a budget hearing, the night before, I enjoy
14 preparing for this budget hearing, but last night I
15 was in Blair County at the viewing for Brian. And
16 on Saturday, for those of you who do not know, one
17 of our workers, our maintenance foremen, was killed
18 while setting up flares outside of an accident,
19 trying to protect the lives of those who were
20 involved in an accident. And in doing so, he lost
21 his own life.

22 I made a promise to his family, and I
23 want to keep that promise. That's why I just wanted
24 a little extra time, and that is, in speaking to his
25 wife and his children and his parents last night, I

1 promised that I would talk about our construction
2 zones and how important it is and that those are
3 people, right, who are working in those zones. And
4 I know how frustrating it is, whether it's a zone
5 that you come up in your daily commute and you're in
6 a rush to get somewhere, to a doctor's appointment
7 or wherever it is that you need to go, but just
8 please remember that it is dangerous work. It is
9 really dangerous work when you have fast moving cars
10 moving around now.

11 And so, you know, we're heartbroken
12 today. In fact, today at 11:00 is his funeral. And
13 his PennDOT truck will be part of the funeral
14 procession with his team members in that truck. So
15 you know, on the good side of that, we've had really
16 wonderful outpouring from so many people who care
17 about PennDOT and the PennDOT family and everybody
18 who works on our roadways, and we truly appreciate
19 that.

20 But I did promise the family that I would
21 keep talking about it. This is my first opportunity
22 to talk about it, and I'm going to continue. And I
23 would ask you to do so, as well, whenever you have
24 the opportunity, just to remind your constituents
25 and remind any audience that you speak to that it is

1 really important to be present when you're driving.

2 We get distracted so many times in our
3 thoughts or other things that we're doing, but it is
4 really important to the safety of those who are
5 working on our roads. So with that, thank you.

6 Yes, safety is very important. I'm very
7 proud of the fact that in 2016 we had the lowest
8 number of fatalities in Pennsylvania since records
9 have been kept. We continue to do everything we
10 can. Part of that is because we work with other
11 agencies to make sure that we are doing everything,
12 including the Department of Education educating
13 people on safety manners, working with DCNR, working
14 with State Police, working with PEMA, making sure
15 that everybody is on the same page.

16 So I'm very proud. We are one of only
17 four States that had a decline in the number of
18 fatalities in 2016. I think 2017, we will have
19 equal success with that, so very excited about that.
20 Safety is at the forefront of everything we do every
21 single day. And every single member of the 11,308
22 people who work for PennDOT would tell you the same.
23 If you ask them what is the most important thing
24 they do, that is it.

25 So yeah, I'm sorry. The talking about

1 Brian got me a little, but your second question real
2 quick.

3 REPRESENTATIVE DEAN: You know what, I'll
4 talk to you offline about the other two questions
5 because I want to say the same thing. Many of us
6 here travel that Turnpike and our public roads often
7 in a hurry, often distracted. And everybody should
8 ease off the gas in these construction zones. We
9 have made such strides, your leadership, the
10 Governor's leadership, Act 89, such strides making
11 our roads better and safer and we owe it to the
12 people working on those roads to just slow down. So
13 I'll pass on my other questions.

14 Thank you.

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you. I
16 appreciate that.

17 Thanks.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Madam
19 Secretary, I think Chairman Markosek and the entire
20 Committee send our thoughts and prayers to the
21 family of the worker who lost his life, but I agree
22 with Madeleine Dean, Representative Dean, in that I
23 think that one of the things that really frustrates
24 me as I travel the deadly highway of 83 is, I see
25 constantly people where there's an accident scene,

1 and we see that all the time, whether it's 76 or
2 wherever it is, people rubbernecking, people on the
3 phone.

4 I've been amazed when I've watched people
5 do their computers in their cars at the same time
6 they're driving. So I don't know what we can do. I
7 mean, we've passed a lot of laws here, but I guess
8 more is involved in educating people about highway
9 safety. So it's something I think a lot of us have
10 concerns about because we see it as we travel back
11 and forth to the Capitol and all the different
12 highways that lead in and out of here from
13 Pittsburgh to Philly.

14 But if there is something that we can do
15 at the Capitol, the Transportation Committees can
16 do, I know Chairman Keller and Chairman Taylor would
17 be interested in knowing because I -- it just seems
18 to be a constant thing, and it's not seeming to get
19 any better.

20 So just as an input or Chairman's
21 privilege here, I think we're all looking for ways
22 to make the highways safer. And with today's
23 technology and everything else, I guess GPS in cars
24 is a little bit better, helpful, but at the same
25 time, people still seem to not take the lessons to

1 heart. So we will move on to the next questioner.

2 Again --

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: That can be a
4 distraction, as well. And I realized as I got
5 caught up, Bobby Gensimore is his name. I just want
6 to say his name.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Yes. Thank
8 you.

9 Representative Sonney.

10 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman.

12 Good morning, Madam Secretary. I'm over
13 here.

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: I want to talk a
16 little bit about the Real ID Act.

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes.

18 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: You know, you
19 supplied the General Assembly with a report last
20 August, I think, kind of informing us on the rollout
21 and the cost of that rollout. And one of the things
22 in that report was that you had mentioned that you
23 would build new facilities, retrofit existing
24 facilities, upgrade systems and provide
25 communication regarding the new Real ID Act.

1 So you know, after just listening to you
2 say that our current licensing centers are at
3 capacity, obviously, we've known this for quite some
4 time, so are you kind of using this Real ID Act and
5 having to implement it as just like a reason for
6 additional funding to be able to upgrade your
7 existing facilities?

8 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, we need to do
9 Real ID. Right now, our plan, we upgrade one
10 facility a year, so we will continue to do that.
11 With Real ID, we know that we need extra centers and
12 we're looking at, you know, opening five new
13 centers.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Could you explain
15 that, please?

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

17 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: You know, why you
18 would need -- it's the same people, it's just
19 they're either getting this license or this license,
20 but it's the same amount of people. So that's --

21 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Not exactly. It
22 is -- first of all, if anybody wants to use a
23 Real ID on October 1st of 2020, when it will be
24 mandatory to have a real ID to fly or use a passport
25 or other stuff, so if you're in the middle -- right

1 now, our licenses are in a four-year cycle. So you
2 may have gotten your license this year, maybe you
3 got it this week. If you need a real ID by October
4 2020, you are not going to wait for the four-year
5 cycle to get a Real ID.

6 So we are going to have an influx of
7 millions of people who need to get that ID. And so
8 it's not within the cycle, so we have to get ready
9 to take on that bump of people who are coming in.

10 Also, the Federal law mandates what is
11 required of a Real ID center. We cannot print
12 Real IDs out of our centers as of now. It has to
13 have certain safety/security measures. It has to
14 have certain structures within the building. It's
15 not just the ID that's different, but it's the
16 security around the building, how the building is
17 built, you know, what it can withstand should
18 somebody, you know, try to come into the building,
19 and so we have to upgrade.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Is that all
21 because of printing them there, all of the security
22 and all of the --

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Correct. Correct.

24 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: So your intention
25 in the future would be to print them on site, even

1 though in the beginning of the rollout, they will
2 not be.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: In the new centers,
4 they will be printed at those centers, but you will
5 also have the option to go into any of our drivers
6 license centers with your documentation, get the
7 intake of the documentation and have the Real ID
8 printed at a different center, not where you are
9 because we can't print them at each one, and it will
10 be mailed to you later.

11 You will be able to do the documentation
12 at those drivers license centers.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: And so would your
14 intention be to continue operation of those newer
15 facilities, you know, into the future or are some
16 centers going to close after the bump?

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes, yes, yes.

18 Well, what we do is we tend to expand our
19 service to take this new bump of people who are
20 going to want the Real IDs. And the Real IDs, by
21 the way, are an opt-in. It's a \$30 one-time fee.
22 You don't have to get it if you have a passport. If
23 you don't travel, if you have no need for it, you
24 can still stay at your regular ID, which is
25 currently a \$30.50 renewal rate, or you can pay the

1 one-time \$30.00 fee and get a real ID in addition to
2 the \$30.50. So the total would be \$60.50 for a
3 Real ID.

4 If you have years left on your ID, we
5 want to make sure we're fair to everybody. We will
6 be giving you -- for instance, if you have two years
7 left, we will be giving you a Real ID with six years
8 in it so you won't have to pay extra to renew and
9 you'll get your full renewal rate off of it. You
10 won't have to pay another fee for another four
11 years.

12 And so there are all those different, you
13 know, issues that we have to deal with.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: I think you've
15 also indicated an approximate cost of \$100 million?

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: That is for the
17 capital cost, for startup to get the new centers
18 retrofitted. To get all the intake, we have to
19 increase our personnel because, as you're hearing --

20 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Do you know if
21 that's comparable with other States that have rolled
22 it out?

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I know that our fees
24 are definitely comparable. So our costs are
25 comparable, yes.

1 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: You believe the
2 rollout costs are comparable also?

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I do. It's very
4 hard to compare because our State is so large and we
5 have, you know, so many licenses. Not many States
6 have nearly 10 million licenses and that's where the
7 big challenge is, as well.

8 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: I think Florida's
9 and Illinois' cost was \$57 or \$58 million. I think
10 that would be somewhat comparable.

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It might be, but I
12 know that they don't have same day. They can't get
13 their license the same day like we can. And they
14 also did not have a State legislature, a law that
15 did not allow them to start this process until the
16 middle of the cycle. So part of it is that we are
17 rushing to get this done.

18 If we had been allowed to move forward
19 within cycle, it would have been a lot less, but we
20 didn't have that luxury. And so we have to take on
21 those extra costs to allow people who are in the
22 mid-cycle -- if it had been every four years, then
23 yes, we would have been. And I know those other
24 States did have that ability to do that and work it
25 within their regular cycles.

1 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Thank you.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Very good. We
4 will move to Representative Boyle.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BOYLE: Thank you,
6 Secretary Richards.

7 Last year you were here and I brought up
8 the issue of high speed rail, which I know is a
9 topic that you are very interested in. I represent
10 a portion of the City of Philadelphia, and I'm
11 highly, highly interested in high speed rail, as I
12 think everyone should be, who is from Pennsylvania,
13 because of the promise, specifically, of economic
14 growth that it would provide, not just the
15 Philadelphia area, but the entire State of
16 Pennsylvania.

17 We've seen urban centers in Europe and
18 also Asia blossom and grow, specifically many cities
19 in China, because of bullet trains. The promise of,
20 and the potential of, travel between New York and
21 Philadelphia within 20 or 25 minutes, or 40 minutes
22 between Philadelphia and Washington D.C., I couldn't
23 think of something that could boost the greater
24 Philadelphia economy more than that.

25 We've seen the development already around

1 30th Street Station with the Cira Centre and full
2 occupancy in those high rises around there. If we
3 actually had high speed rail, I think we would be
4 the economic engine of the east coast of the United
5 States, if not the entire country.

6 Surely this is more of a Federal issue,
7 but I was curious to what effect and what impact
8 could we, as State lawmakers, take the initiative to
9 actually set the ground for actually a successful
10 high speed rail system in this State?

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. I think the
12 best thing you could do is speak to the
13 congressional delegation and FRA because we would
14 not be able to get a high speed rail without major
15 Federal assistance.

16 I am a huge advocate for high speed rail.
17 I know Governor Wolf is, as well. In fact, it's
18 probably the topic that gets talked about most when
19 we're together and we don't have to do, you know,
20 work-work, you know. We would love to see high
21 speed rail here in Pennsylvania.

22 While it would be a wonderful thing to
23 have, and I agree with you, it would be a huge boost
24 to the economy, it's also very expensive. So we
25 have to figure out how to get those funds. Again,

1 we wouldn't be able to do it on State funds alone,
2 so Federal help is something that's very important
3 to get that done.

4 I've traveled to Europe. I've been to
5 China. I have seen the high speed rail system and I
6 can see what it can do. And so we are very, you
7 know, interested in working with you. I could, you
8 know, name a few places, you know, right now where
9 I'd love to see it, but again, it would take
10 hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of
11 dollars, to get it there.

12 We see our Amtrak system right now, and I
13 think, you know, it's not hard to see the
14 shortcomings of where it is, where we still need
15 positive train control, where we still can't get to
16 the higher speeds, some lines where it takes longer
17 to get there by train than it does to drive. And so
18 we have to figure that out.

19 But you know, I'm happy to look into it.
20 Obviously, we have a rail group that looks at these
21 things all the time, but we need something to move.
22 And what we need to move right now is the Federal
23 government in the support of FRA.

24 I am going to be in D.C. next week. I do
25 plan on meeting with our congressional delegation.

1 I do have a one-on-one meeting with
2 Chairman Shuster. This will be a part of that
3 conversation, to see what it is that we might be
4 able to do.

5 And again, I'm happy to talk to you
6 further about it. And I couldn't agree with you
7 more that Pennsylvania is primed to really benefit
8 from a high speed rail, particularly from D.C.
9 through Boston.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BOYLE: Thank you.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
12 Delozier.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Timing is
14 everything, right?

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, exactly.

16 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Shouldn't be
17 hiding over on the side.

18 Good morning. Thank you for being here.

19 First, I did want to start off and say
20 thank you very much. PennDOT and one of my local
21 boroughs of Lemoyne worked very, very well, and your
22 staff worked very patiently with all of the ins and
23 outs of doing a mural. They wanted to do a mural,
24 getting off the highway and --

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It's beautiful.

1 Yes.

2 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Hopefully, it's
3 not distracting.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I think it's
5 gorgeous. First of all, it's the history --

6 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Of Lemoyne.

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- of Lemoyne --

8 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Right.

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- but it's tied to
10 transportation, so I think it's --

11 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: It is. It is.

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- beautiful.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: I just wanted
14 to put that out there and say thank you to your
15 staff. They worked very hard to work with the
16 Borough and to make sure that everybody was safe in
17 doing it, as well as getting it accomplished. So
18 thank you very much.

19 I want to go back a little bit to the
20 Real ID, if we can. That is a question that I get a
21 tremendous amount of in the office. We're lucky we
22 can come right to Harrisburg and get our renewals
23 and all of the things that go with that.

24 One of my questions is, it's \$29.50 --
25 originally when we had this conversation, everybody

1 kept estimating the fact that it would -- the
2 license itself was going to cost about \$100.00
3 because of the technology and everything else. My
4 concerns are the gaps. And the reason is that
5 \$29.50, which is very reasonable for someone who may
6 need it or want it --

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It's actually
8 \$30.00.

9 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Oh, okay. We
10 have \$29.50. Okay. Yeah, it went up. It went up
11 50 cents.

12 So the ability for us to take that \$29 --
13 that's not going to cover the entire \$100 million
14 that we've talked about, of the cost of this.

15 And how are we making up that gap,
16 because the idea behind our opt-in was that those
17 that wanted this service would pay for the service?

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Correct. So we're
19 basing everything on estimates right now. We're
20 assuming, from what we're seeing in other States,
21 that 25 percent of those who have IDs are going to
22 want Real ID. That's what we see as opt-in on
23 others.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay.

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We felt that \$30.00

1 was fair. It covered a good portion of the costs.
2 And you know, we feel that we fall in the middle, as
3 some States are charging much, much more than that.
4 We understand the impact on the airline industry and
5 other economic development areas of what getting a
6 Real ID may mean.

7 We know that people who rely on it -- we
8 know, you know, seniors who need to fly and others
9 are going to be required to get a Real ID. So we
10 felt that was a good price to cover the costs, as
11 well as be fair to our constituents.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay. And so
13 how --

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: But you are correct
15 in that it doesn't cover the full cost.

16 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Correct.

17 So how are we making that up, then?

18 How are we paying the \$100 million?

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, we have set
20 aside, you know, for the startup and we have, you
21 know, planned regularly. You know, we have a
22 certain amount of funds for our facilities, and you
23 know, it's coming out of those budgeted line items.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: So it's coming
25 from other areas of the Department in and of itself?

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We're not taking --
2 I mean, it's coming from money that would be used in
3 our driver and vehicle services, yes.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Is there -- are
5 we going to see any cut in services from those areas
6 that some of the money is coming from?

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: No. No. You should
8 not see any reduction. You know, we continue -- as
9 has been pointed out, we continue to work on our
10 regular service for those who want --

11 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Sure.

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- regular driver's
13 licenses and --

14 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Right.

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- CDLs, and that
16 will continue to be a challenge. It's a big part of
17 what we do, but no, you will not see decreases.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay. And just
19 one clarification.

20 Earlier you had talked about five new
21 centers opening up when Representative Sonney had
22 asked. And one of the issues that you had put --
23 and I understand the same day with our regular
24 driver's license.

25 Did I understand correctly that the new

1 centers with Real ID, you'd be mailing them out or
2 they wouldn't be same day or they will be same day?

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: The new centers --

4 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: For Real ID.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- will be built to
6 the Real ID specification. You can get them the
7 same day.

8 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: You will be
9 able to.

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We know that there
11 will be emergencies, like if you have to travel for
12 a funeral, a sickness, you know, there are times
13 when you need an ID right away and we want to make
14 that available, and it will be spread geographically
15 around Pennsylvania.

16 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay.

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And you will know
18 where the quickest one is for you to get that
19 Real ID. But for those of you who don't need it and
20 can plan ahead, there will be that mail option. And
21 we're also retrofitting centers, as well.

22 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay. I
23 appreciate that. Thank you.

24 And one quick question to fit in at the
25 end is, I have a lot of classes or a lot of high

1 schools in our area and everything else with the
2 driver's license testing. One of the biggest issues
3 that they've run into is the extreme waiting in
4 order to take a test.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Many times, my
7 office will get called. We know that it's six
8 months. And I tell everyone that the day you get
9 your permit, you need to call that day, including my
10 own son, who did not listen to me, I might point
11 out. And he reminded me I was a constituent, too,
12 and I should, you know, fix that.

13 But my question really lies in the fact
14 of how come -- why does it take six months to get?

15 Because the turnaround also -- and I went
16 red, so you get to finish the question. Sorry,
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 But for the retakes, if they fail, the
19 biggest issue is not only the six months because you
20 have to wait six months anyway in order before you
21 can take the test -- that in and of itself lies
22 within the guidelines -- but if they fail, they
23 can't get another test for three months.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I will try to
25 answer --

1 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: I'm done.

2 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- this as fast as
3 possible, if allowed, and I won't take long. First
4 of all, I have two children who turned 16 while I
5 was in this job, which is very cruel to make them
6 take a test with their mother's picture in the
7 drivers license center.

8 So I know, and I know all of the issues
9 that they've had, and trust me, their friends and
10 their friends' parents, who are, you know, very,
11 very anxious to call me to tell me when they have
12 issues. What we have done is, last year we did a
13 pilot program with third party testers to help get
14 people through.

15 We had ten locations. Of those 10
16 locations, we were able to get an extra 20,000 tests
17 in. We are now expanding that. So we are looking
18 at that and we understand that that's a problem.
19 And we don't want -- we want to reduce wait times
20 while you're there to get your license, but we also
21 want to reduce wait times for testing.

22 The average is 50 percent of the people
23 who take tests fail, so we know that they have to
24 come back to take the test again. So we are looking
25 at that, but part of what we are doing is this third

1 party tester, as well as bringing on more people and
2 extending our hours when we can in the centers that
3 aren't already operating full-time.

4 We've brought in, you know, people to
5 come in on Monday, which is normally a day that
6 they're closed because they have to work Saturdays.
7 So we're looking at those options, as well.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Thank you,
9 Madam Secretary.

10 I am learning that these quick questions
11 aren't quite so quick. There's a new definition of
12 quick questions.

13 But anyway, with that, I wanted to
14 recognize Representative Perry Warren, who's here as
15 a guest, as well. He's not on the Appropriations
16 Committee, but he's here and joined for the
17 testimony.

18 With that, I would like to recognize
19 Representative Kinsey.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Good morning, Madam Secretary.

23 Madam Secretary, I represent the City of
24 Philadelphia. SEPTA, of course, is housed right
25 there in the City of Philadelphia. There have been

1 some members who have questioned, you know, SEPTA
2 receiving funds, basically stating that it only
3 impacts the city and the surrounding counties.
4 However, we recently received information that shows
5 that SEPTA has an impact, not just in the City of
6 Philadelphia, but also in counties much farther
7 away, going towards the west.

8 Can you speak towards the economic impact
9 that SEPTA has on the Commonwealth?

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. I just have
11 to say this because you asked the question, but the
12 Super Bowl champions, the Eagles' parade would not
13 have been able to happen without the work of SEPTA.

14 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Great. Great.

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So I just have to
16 say that.

17 Look, SEPTA provides a huge help. So
18 it's not just the large events. You know, while I'm
19 very proud about the Eagles, there are large events
20 that Philadelphia hosts, not just for southeastern
21 Pennsylvania, but for the entire State, for the
22 entire region: NFL draft, the DNC, the papal visit.

23 All of these things, the reason that
24 those huge events choose Philadelphia is because of
25 SEPTA and because of the transit system that is

1 there. And it's not only those one-time impacts. I
2 mean, the reason that Amazon is looking at
3 Pittsburgh and Philadelphia is because of our
4 transit systems in both of those areas, and so it's
5 very important.

6 Not only that, but the congestion that
7 exists -- I mean, I always laugh in Harrisburg when
8 people come to visit, when should I leave? I don't
9 want to hit the traffic.

10 And they're from Philadelphia. And I
11 say, you can leave any time you want because there's
12 no traffic like Philadelphia traffic. Like you
13 don't -- they don't get it, you know. They don't
14 get hit like we do, right?

15 And so if SEPTA did not exist, the
16 congestion -- I mean, basically southeastern
17 Pennsylvania would be a parking lot, because think
18 of every person that takes SEPTA, whether it's
19 regional rail, trolley, buses, subway. That's less
20 cars in a very congested area.

21 I do know, because I have sat on the
22 SEPTA Board for many years, they still have a
23 \$5 billion backlog on their state-of-good-repair.
24 So they still need much needed funds. They're doing
25 the best they can with the limited resources that

1 they have. I think they're doing an excellent job,
2 but they have a lot of challenges.

3 They just crossed over to their new key
4 card, which is how you get on. And so, you know,
5 there have been some bumps in the road for them on
6 that, but again, they're doing a wonderful job. It
7 impacts so many more people than just those who live
8 in center -- even the regional rail lines, you know,
9 go out to all of the suburbs around and the counties
10 around.

11 During the Pope visit, we had thousands,
12 tens of thousands, of people that were staying out
13 in Valley Forge because they knew that they could
14 take, you know, the Norristown regional line and get
15 into Philadelphia easy, so it's a tremendous asset.

16 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Madam Secretary,
17 in addition to the rail system that you just
18 previously talked about, my understanding is that
19 there are also procurement opportunities for some of
20 the other counties as it relates to SEPTA, as well.

21 SECRETARY RICHARDS: As far as --

22 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Just in regards
23 to, I guess, SEPTA putting out contracts.

24 I received a chart here that shows that
25 -- basically, it showed that 41 counties across the

1 Commonwealth basically were able to benefit through,
2 I guess, contracts through SEPTA and so forth on.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: You know what, I'll
4 have to -- I don't know that exact --

5 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Okay.

6 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- where that report
7 came from. I'm happy to look into it.

8 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Okay.

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I'm not surprised
10 that the regional impacts are far, you know, far
11 extended.

12 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Far-reaching.

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah. Outside, they
14 do provide a lot of work that might be firms that
15 they employ. I know that, you know, their work, and
16 I know from being on the Board, as well, that when
17 we award work, it goes to firms, you know,
18 throughout Pennsylvania. And they do like to stay
19 with Pennsylvania firms when possible.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Great.

21 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So that might be
22 what they're talking about, but I'm happy to find
23 out where that came from and get the details on it.

24 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: I appreciate
25 that. And I think just for the members'

1 information, I think it's just important to show
2 that, you know, some folks think SEPTA is in a silo
3 by itself and just really benefiting the City of
4 Philadelphia, I just think it's important to
5 recognize the economic impact that SEPTA is having
6 statewide, not just in the southeast region.

7 And you know, I would like to thank your
8 Department because, again, you've sort of helped
9 make those things happen. So again, I just want to
10 say thank you for your work that you've been doing,
11 as well. So thank you.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: They're great
14 partners to work with.

15 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Great. Thank
16 you.

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thanks.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
19 James.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Welcome, Secretary Richards.

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Nice to see you
24 again.

25 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Nice to see you.

1 A question about reduction in costs, and
2 then one about another issue, if I may. Back a
3 little over a year ago, my office, and I presume
4 everyone else's office, began to get a lot of
5 questions from constituents about the lack of
6 registration stickers. And everybody was afraid
7 they were going to be incarcerated all over the
8 country because they couldn't prove that their car
9 was up to snuff.

10 I wonder what the experience has been,
11 because that's quieted down quite a bit in my area.

12 Did you actually recognize the cost
13 savings?

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes. We have
15 achieved nearly \$3 million in cost savings. And
16 that was from money saved on postage, on mailings,
17 on purchasing the stickers themselves. We have, you
18 know, we weren't able to talk a lot.

19 It was tied to the biennial registration,
20 as well. I just want to tie both of those topics in
21 for a second. But we've just had one year, so we
22 have to take a look at what our data is showing us.
23 We have not heard anything. And we did try, because
24 I did ask our staff. We did try to get information
25 from law enforcement to see how it has impacted them

1 this year, and we don't have those totals yet.

2 So we will be reporting back, but it will
3 take a few years for us to get the data to see. I
4 have not heard anything negative about it. And of
5 course, it's not that we are no longer requiring
6 cars to be registered, they still have to be
7 registered. I feel that it is a huge customer
8 service benefit that the people can now do it
9 online. They can print it out themselves.

10 It's much easier. I hear that all the
11 time. So I've heard a lot of positive things about
12 it. Of course people love the cost savings, as
13 well, so that's good.

14 I don't want to waste your time, but I'll
15 get back to the biennial registration in another
16 question, if you want to -- I don't know if you had
17 another question or I can get to it.

18 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: I do.

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Okay.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Totally separate
21 subject about public-private transportation projects
22 and partnerships. Last year, according to this
23 information, there were 558 bridges on the docket to
24 be either upgraded or replaced. And it took a
25 little while, I presume, because of weather.

1 Do you feel like you're on target to
2 finish those?

3 And what does the future hold?

4 What is your plan for the next round?

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We do. So look, the
6 P-3 Project has been a learning experience. There
7 have been a lot of lessons, some good and some not
8 so good. Right now, I do feel very good about it.
9 We have 390 bridges completed, 168 at the last
10 briefing that I had, which was last week. I think
11 it's actually closer to 160 right now.

12 But that's still a lot of bridges that
13 need to be done this year. We need a lot of things
14 to fall in place. As you can imagine, the bridges
15 that are left are some of the more complex bridges.
16 The ones that were easy to do have already been
17 completed. And so the challenges of utility,
18 relocations of roadway, right-of-way, all of those
19 type of coordination issues that can delay a project
20 are still, you know, are still there.

21 So we do need a lot of things to fall
22 into place to get those bridges done. We have
23 several team members at PennDOT who are working
24 full-time on this project along with our partners at
25 Plenary Walsh, but we feel very good where it is.

1 And these 558 bridges, which should be done by the
2 end of this year or significantly done, maybe a
3 handful left over for next year, are in mostly rural
4 areas.

5 These are bridges that would not have had
6 time or would not have gotten the prioritization
7 that would have been done in this time frame. We
8 probably wouldn't have been able to visit some of
9 them for eight to 12-15 years from now. And so the
10 fact that they're being done now before they have to
11 be reduced by weight limits, as well as possibly
12 closed, is good.

13 In our rural areas, you know, a detour
14 can be even more devastating because they're often
15 longer and they're on back roads, as well. So we're
16 very happy with how things are moving along, but
17 again, I'm going to keep my fingers crossed. And I
18 hope this year will go well for us. It should be
19 seen as a success.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Thank you for
21 that. And since I have just a little bit more time,
22 can you give me an idea of why the engineering costs
23 for these are so exceptionally high?

24 To me, they're high.

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, there's

1 economies of scale, but again, you know, each bridge
2 needs, you know, something to be done. When I say
3 that there are lessons learned and there were some
4 bumps in this process, you know, what I was really
5 hoping was that we were going to figure out a faster
6 project delivery, that we were going to find out new
7 designs and really be able to move our entire, you
8 know, our entire approach to bridges. And that
9 hasn't really come about in this issue.

10 We had some very individual, specific
11 issues that did not allow us to use that type of
12 approach and so, you know, we will go back after
13 this project is over, again, do some after-action
14 reviews and find out why it didn't go as smoothly as
15 we had hoped. But again, we were able to regroup,
16 again, working with our partners and get it back on
17 track.

18 And I'm very proud of that. It took a
19 lot of effort on both sides. At times, we were both
20 unhappy, which I think is a very good sign of a good
21 agreement.

22 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: That's what they
23 say.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And we're looking
25 forward to the success of this project.

1 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Thank you very
2 much.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thanks.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: We move to
5 Representative Briggs.

6 REPRESENTATIVE BRIGGS: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 Thank you, Madam Secretary, for
9 everything you do for the Commonwealth of
10 Pennsylvania.

11 The leadership that you've taken on the
12 autonomous vehicle topic, specifically, really is
13 making Pennsylvania, I think, a leader and made to
14 look good for all of us. So I thank you for that.

15 You're always very enthusiastic and
16 excited to participate in today's hearing. You
17 always shine some light on some topics that make me
18 think -- I never realized that when the legislature
19 takes action, sometimes it costs us a lot more money
20 and takes us a long time to fix. So the Real ID
21 challenge that you were given, I think you really
22 handled yourself well and set us on a path to get a
23 good product for the citizens.

24 And then the topic of the drivers
25 centers. Norristown I've been at a few times. My

1 daughter also is 16 and has a permit and has visited
2 a number of times. She'll get her license soon, but
3 the technology investments that you made in that
4 center, and I'm sure across the Commonwealth,
5 they're much different than two years ago, five
6 years ago, 10 years ago.

7 I mean, it really is an improvement.
8 Nothing is perfect, but I want to thank you for
9 that.

10 The topic that I was hoping you could
11 talk a little bit about, coming from the southeast
12 and the King of Prussia area, traffic congestion is
13 a challenge. And I know you've taken some bold
14 steps to try to address it with what we have and
15 using intelligent transportation systems.

16 Could you talk a little bit about the
17 strategy you've implemented with 76 and neighboring
18 communities, just to --

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BRIGGS: I would love to
21 do a deck, but I understand that's challenging.

22 So could you just share it that way for
23 the Committee?

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: You and
25 Representative Boyle -- one could do high speed rail

1 and one could do the deck. Then we could -- then
2 we'd have no money left for anything else.

3 But very excited because I love
4 technology, and it's very important to me that the
5 DOT be a modern DOT. And one way in which we can do
6 that is with the intelligent transportation systems,
7 the realtime data. So I-76 is our first large
8 project.

9 Again, we have nowhere else to go. We've
10 got tough geology. We've got water on one side. We
11 can't afford to do another deck. I agree, I'd love
12 to see that; but that's just not economically
13 feasible.

14 So what we're doing is we're looking at
15 hard shoulder running, which is our first
16 application of that. It's been done in other States
17 successfully, where at times it's only two lanes in
18 each direction -- particularly from your district,
19 you know, from the Valley Forge to the Blue Route,
20 which can get quite congested -- and one of the
21 worst corridors, by the way, in Pennsylvania if not
22 the worst corridor -- we will be able to get three
23 lanes in each direction.

24 We worked with local law enforcement to
25 make sure that they were okay with this. Obviously,

1 when there's an accident or an issue, we want to
2 make sure that they can get where they need to get
3 safely. We're also looking at the amount of lane
4 changing at variable speeds. We are looking at
5 upgrades to SEPTA's Conshohocken station in
6 conjunction with what we are doing so that anybody
7 on I-76 will have data that says how many parking
8 spaces are left at that garage, when the next train
9 is coming.

10 So if they choose to get off, of course
11 any car that gets off the corridor also helps us
12 with congestion and getting the flow going, so
13 that's helpful. We're upgrading our arterial routes
14 also throughout ITS, where Ridge Avenue and 23,
15 which are parallel on either side of I-76 are -- for
16 the first time ever, PennDOT is taking over the
17 maintenance and operation of signals. Usually,
18 municipalities do that.

19 And so in some of these areas, you could
20 go through 11 different municipalities and you want
21 to have your signals looked at. So we're very happy
22 to be doing that. So to allow people who don't need
23 to be on I-76, who can use those arterials, we want
24 them to use that, and we're also doing upgrades to
25 the trail, to the Schuylkill River Trail there. So

1 if anyone would like to bike or to walk, they have
2 that option, as well.

3 But we're very excited that the I-76
4 corridor will really be significant as far as how
5 we're using technology, and we're looking at using
6 many of those things, the realtime, the dynamic lane
7 changes, ramp metering, as well, on 476 and other
8 major corridors also out west, as well.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BRIGGS: Well, I just want
10 to add that you're making us look good on a national
11 level, but you're also making us look good with our
12 constituents. So I want to thank you and your
13 Department for all of the great work you're doing.

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thanks.

15 REPRESENTATIVE BRIGGS: Thank you,
16 Secretary.

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
19 Sue Helm.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Secretary Richards, I'd like to talk
23 about mass transit, specifically our passenger train
24 service. I understand that a study is taking place
25 for the Pennsylvania service from Harrisburg to

1 Pittsburgh and would study the feasibility of adding
2 two new daily passenger trains to the route linking
3 Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

4 Can you provide me with an update on the
5 feasibility study?

6 And can you also detail the annual cost
7 of the Commonwealth to operate the daily
8 Pennsylvania line currently?

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. So look,
10 train service needs to be improved, and we're doing
11 as much as we can. Where we're seeing the largest
12 increase in ridership is from Philadelphia to
13 Harrisburg. And so we are doing things -- we're
14 using P-3 to upgrade some of our stations. We are
15 working with Amtrak.

16 Obviously, we have to work closely with
17 Amtrak, as well. We subsidize Amtrak to the tune of
18 hundreds of millions of dollars to help fund that
19 service, as well. Amtrak does have new leadership
20 right now, which I think is a good thing. It's
21 someone coming from the airline industry, who's
22 really looking at the business of Amtrak.

23 And so our relationship with Amtrak in
24 the past, not just this Administration, but past
25 administrations, as well, has been a tough

1 relationship. So I'm hoping that this new
2 leadership will allow us to do things which we have
3 been looking at doing from the Harrisburg to
4 Pittsburgh line but have not been able to with the
5 last leadership.

6 So we're looking to see if we can make
7 investments in railcars and how we can best make
8 investments and deal with liability issues at
9 stations.

10 As far as the trip to Pittsburgh, right
11 now, as you know, there's just one going and one
12 coming every day, and it takes a very long time. It
13 could take, I think, five hours, right?

14 And you can drive it in three and a half.
15 So we have to take a look at that. And in reducing
16 time for people and encouraging and incentivizing
17 them to use the service, while there are some people
18 -- and I would say I'm one of them. I love trains,
19 and I will go out of my way to take a train.

20 But you know, time is also very
21 important. So on a daily basis, no one is looking,
22 you know, to waste an hour and a half each way. So
23 we're taking a look at that. I can get you some of
24 the specific numbers. The study to Pittsburgh has
25 -- we have the data, but now it's just figuring out

1 what we need to do.

2 We have some other issues with Amtrak
3 that we're working through, mainly on liability
4 issues and how we do work near their facilities and
5 assets, and they do work near ours and we have to
6 hammer those out first.

7 But that's where it sits right now. I
8 do -- I think the most opportunity right now is to
9 improve where we're seeing the increase in ridership
10 from Philadelphia to Harrisburg, and we'll continue
11 to look for ways to improve out to Pittsburgh.

12 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: What I would also
13 like to propose is a late night Saturday train from
14 New York to Harrisburg. I honestly think that would
15 pay off.

16 That's something maybe -- is that Federal
17 also, you have to talk to Congressman Shuster?

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It is. I have
19 several -- and I enjoy these conversations. You
20 know, I'm talking, you know, I just spoke to
21 Senator Blake regarding, you know, the Scranton area
22 getting into New York. I just spoke with people out
23 west talking about getting from Altoona to
24 Pittsburgh, as well, and to the Harrisburg area.

25 So many communities would love to see

1 rail. It's a huge asset, but we have to figure out
2 a way to make it work. And how the current
3 conditions are right now with the FRA and with the
4 Federal -- and I don't mean to -- you know, this is
5 a situation that has existed in past
6 administrations. It's not just something that's new
7 to us. We have to figure out a better way to invest
8 in rail in this entire country and also to help
9 Pennsylvania.

10 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: I've been asking
11 for that train from New York to Harrisburg on
12 Saturday night. This is my 12th year and I've asked
13 for it every year, so I'm not going to give up until
14 we get it.

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I have heard you and
16 I will write that down.

17 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: I just have another
18 quick question. It has to do with appraisers and
19 eminent domain.

20 Does PennDOT have appraisers or not?

21 And how does the eminent domain work as
22 far as what we pay out?

23 And what's our annual cost for purchasing
24 properties?

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: You know, as a local

1 elected official, I've dealt with eminent domain
2 issues. And appraisers, we've always hired outside
3 appraisers. And I know any elected, you know, any
4 government body, whether it's local or whether it's
5 the State, you can't do anything without an
6 appraisal.

7 You know, you can't give more than the
8 appraised value. I don't believe that PennDOT has
9 our own appraisers. I believe we use outside firms,
10 but I will check on that.

11 And as far as eminent domain, I believe
12 it's done locally, although the State may, you know,
13 may have gone out to do it. Obviously, if it's on
14 our property, we would go out and do it.

15 Again, as it was as a local elected
16 official, it would be my last resort. Eminent
17 domain is never an easy process. And so it
18 definitely would only be done if it has to be done.

19 REPRESENTATIVE HELM: All right. Thank
20 you.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
22 Schweyer -- or I'm sorry, correction.

23 Representative Krueger-Braneky.

24 Sorry, Representative.

25 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER-BRANEKY: Thank

1 you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Thank you, Madam Secretary, for joining
3 us here today and for all of the work that your team
4 does on behalf of our constituents. I've got two
5 questions for you, and the first one is about SEPTA.

6 I know in my district in Delaware County,
7 my constituents depend on SEPTA to get to work.
8 We've got a number of regional rail stops within my
9 district, lots of trolleys and buses. And if SEPTA
10 stopped running, it would be devastating for my
11 constituents, and in particular for my seniors.

12 One of the things I've noticed since
13 we've started the partnership with SEPTA on the
14 Senior Key Card Program is every single day we've
15 got folks walking into our legislative office to get
16 their SEPTA key card. And it's a service that they
17 are using on a very, very regular basis.

18 So my question is this, last year when we
19 were trying to balance the budget, there were a
20 number of proposals that came from members of the
21 legislature. One regarded raiding the Public
22 Transportation Trust Fund. First, we were looking
23 at potentially a \$500 million cut, then it got
24 reduced to \$125 million.

25 If the legislature had decided to take

1 that action, what would the impact have been on my
2 constituents and my seniors who depend on SEPTA?

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, it would have
4 been devastating, actually. And I had a
5 three-and-a-half-hour public hearing with the
6 Appropriations Committee on that. And I think it
7 was enlightening for everybody. It allowed us to
8 know where the concerns were, and I really
9 appreciated that opportunity. I have a feeling we
10 will continue that discussion, just to educate
11 everybody on what those moneys are used for.

12 And in transit, it's so important. It's
13 a long-term plan. You can't come up with an idea
14 and spend the money the next day, right?

15 You have to order your equipment. You
16 have to figure out where your routes are. You have
17 to see where your investment needs to be and then
18 you have to have the money available to do it. And
19 you don't need all the money in the first year, you
20 know, you have to spread it out.

21 And so while those funds have money in
22 them, it was very, you know, it was a very good
23 opportunity for us to show exactly that each of
24 those dollars have already been allocated to a
25 project that's in the planning and is going ahead.

1 As far as SEPTA, it would have been devastating
2 because it would truly have reduced their operating,
3 as well as what they can do for capital moving
4 forward.

5 As I've said before, any stop in a SEPTA
6 route would have huge impacts because it would
7 reduce the options that those people can use in
8 order to get around and how they get around. I
9 agree, I see seniors -- I use SEPTA all the time
10 and, you know, I see seniors taking advantage of it.
11 It's free, right, for many of the seniors to use the
12 subways and other things.

13 I think they have to pay a dollar to use
14 the rail, and they do use it. And it helps us and
15 it keeps them mobile, which is a very good thing.
16 And so those funds, it would have hurt -- it would
17 have hurt the entire State because rail, people
18 think, when they think transit, they think of rail,
19 but it's also bus service. It's shared ride.

20 It would have impacted every single
21 county here in Pennsylvania for those who depend on
22 shared ride to get around to do what they need to
23 do, get their groceries and do their daily things,
24 take care of themselves, get to their doctors'
25 appointments, pick up their prescriptions.

1 It's something that people really depend
2 on. Shared rides are challenging. I'm not saying
3 they all operate perfectly, but we do the best that
4 we can. So it would have had a large impact, as
5 well as on the shared ride community in your
6 constituency and around the district -- well, what I
7 call the District 6 area, around eastern
8 Pennsylvania.

9 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER-BRANEKY: And then
10 my second question, you talked about some of the
11 traffic calming measures that are in the works for
12 76. I remember last year you also talked about the
13 Blue Route for 76, which in Delaware County, most
14 mornings and evenings, is a parking lot.

15 So what's the timeline for traffic
16 calming measures for the Blue Route?

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We're going forward
18 with also looking at hard shoulder running right
19 now. So we're doing the preliminary engineering on
20 that. As you can imagine, it's fairly complex, but
21 we're also starting to have the discussions with law
22 enforcement. Because if we don't have local law
23 enforcement buy in, and if they don't understand
24 what's going on and educated and understand what the
25 process is, it doesn't work.

1 And in terms of the Blue Route, I also
2 use it quite often, particularly when I have to get
3 to the airport. That's my route. And I know, and
4 I've sat on it for quite some time. So we're
5 working, and I'm very pleased with how it's coming
6 along. And I think we'll see a lot of improvements.

7 Just like when I talk about I-76, the
8 Blue Route, too, we're not going to make this a
9 raceway. It's going to be a huge improvement of how
10 it is now, but it is not going to be -- I don't want
11 people to think that this is going to solve all of
12 the issues that we have in that area.

13 It's going to take a lot of things, and
14 I'm very proud that this administration is the first
15 in a long time that has been willing and optimistic
16 about making those improvements. Others have said
17 nothing can be done, and I don't believe that. I
18 think a lot can be done, but it's going to take a
19 lot of little things to get those improvements,
20 particularly in that very heavily congested area of
21 the State.

22 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER-BRANEKY: Thank
23 you, Madam Secretary.

24 My constituents are counting on it.

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thanks.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
2 Keller.

3 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Thank you, Mr.
4 Chairman. And thank you, Madam Secretary.

5 I want to focus, because there's probably
6 not any time that we're in the same room that I
7 don't ask you about the Highway Beautification Act,
8 and the concerns that we have for that. I know we
9 talked before, and I think I mentioned the thoughts
10 of asking the Federal government for a waiver on
11 enforcing that in Pennsylvania.

12 Is there any thought on that?

13 Are you planning on doing that or asking
14 the Governor to do that?

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I have thought about
16 that. And I know in our discussions, you know, I
17 don't think you became a Representative, and I know
18 I didn't become a Secretary to deal with signage,
19 you know. That's not -- that wasn't the compelling
20 reason that we're here, but we do have to adhere to
21 Federal guidelines. We have a lot of money, you
22 know, at one point --

23 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Okay. Okay.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: -- six billion
25 dollars.

1 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: I've only got
2 five minutes, and I just want to make some points
3 here.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Okay. Go ahead.

5 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: So you've thought
6 about it.

7 Are you going to pursue with the Governor
8 to ask for a waiver on enforcement of that Act?

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It wouldn't be done
10 through the Governor. Where it would be done would
11 be directly with FHWA. And where I was about to go
12 is that we have a new FHWA Division Administrator
13 coming in Pennsylvania.

14 In fact, her first week will be next
15 week. And so, this is the number one issue that I'm
16 going to discuss with her. And that's where that
17 discussion would start. And then, when it would get
18 to the FHWA administrator in D.C., which has yet to
19 be named by this administration, that's where the
20 Governor may be able to help out.

21 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Because here's
22 the whole point with that. And when I look at this
23 -- and I don't know why it's become such an issue in
24 the past few years -- I don't know if it's been
25 enforced.

1 Has it been enforced uniformly across the
2 Commonwealth?

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: No, it's become an
4 issue because it is a priority of FHWA right now,
5 and they are requiring the DOTs to pay more
6 attention to it. Yes.

7 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Okay. Are we --

8 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So that's why it has
9 become --

10 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: -- enforcing it
11 uniformly across the Commonwealth?

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We are working on
13 that right now, yes.

14 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: So we've done the
15 same amount of audits in all the districts?

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We are working
17 toward that. I can't say for sure we've done that
18 at this time right now, but we're --

19 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Okay. Here's my
20 concern. Here's the concern, quite frankly.

21 We have signs that have been up from
22 non-profits, municipalities, fire companies for 40
23 years. And now we're sending them letters that are
24 not real nice. And we're all willing to -- I mean,
25 the Governor, two of his things are jobs that pay

1 and government that works.

2 Quite frankly, us not pushing this more
3 stringently isn't supporting those. I mean, we have
4 people that have had businesses for 20 years that
5 are being forced to take down signs. You know, I
6 wish we could see the concern for the people that
7 are trying to make a living that have had signs,
8 that we see for other things that we talked about,
9 helping people get around and do other things.

10 This is just as important. And quite
11 frankly, I want to make sure that it's a priority of
12 Department of Transportation. It certainly is one
13 of mine. We've got hardworking people trying to run
14 a business, and they're getting letters, they're
15 being harassed from their government, when we should
16 be saying, hey, look -- I did a thing, and I'm not
17 sure if you're aware of it, but we have signs along
18 the road that say, buckle up next million miles,
19 keep alert. Yet somebody that's trying to make a
20 living, or a non-profit, is being told they have to
21 take their sign down.

22 SECRETARY RICHARDS: What we've been
23 doing -- and trust me, this is not where we want to
24 be. FHWA, we have to abide by Federal guidelines.
25 I don't have employees that take pleasure in

1 enforcing these things, but again, it is law and we
2 must follow the law.

3 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: But my question
4 is, do I have your commitment that you're going to
5 go after trying to get the Highway Administration to
6 get a waiver on that?

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I've already been
8 working on that, and I will continue to do so.

9 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Okay. Because
10 this is a huge issue for our non-profits.

11 One thing I do want to say, and I look
12 around the room here today, and I'm quite impressed
13 with the fact that -- I don't know how many people
14 you have with you here today.

15 Are you here by yourself?

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I have some friends
17 that are here.

18 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Okay. But here's
19 my point. We had an agency yesterday that was in
20 here that tells other businesses how to do stuff,
21 DCED, and they're all about job creation and
22 everything, and they have a bunch of government
23 people sitting in here. And I don't know who's
24 running the store over there, but yet you seem to do
25 a very good job with PennDOT's budget.

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: And you don't
3 have to fill the room with government people, so I
4 guess I'm just going to go here and say this, maybe
5 you ought to show DCED how to run a business.

6 Thank you.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
8 Schweyer.

9 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chairman.

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I heard that and
12 appreciate that, Representative Quinn.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: Moving forward,
14 if I may.

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: All right.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: Madam
17 Secretary, thank you for joining us today.

18 A couple of things. One thing is
19 actually going to be quick, and it's going to be a
20 request. In addition to the fatality of your
21 employee that we had just the other day, last night
22 in Lehigh County, right on the border of Lehigh and
23 Carbon, we had what appears to be a truck driver who
24 was killed when an electrical pole fell on him.

25 I'm not going to ask you to get into any

1 of the details at this moment about any
2 investigation, but being a member of the northeast
3 delegation, when that investigation is complete, if
4 you can, provide us with some level of detail about
5 not only the incident, but also the remedies that
6 have been at or in the Lehigh Tunnel. And so
7 getting some information about that, along with
8 remedies for this in the future.

9 It could have been a freak accident. It
10 could have been something more systemic. I'm
11 interested to hear.

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah. We're working
13 on it right now. In fact, the State Police is out
14 there. I was notified of it around 10:00 last
15 night, actually right after it happened. They were
16 still getting the data together to try to figure out
17 what happened.

18 We work very closely with the State
19 Police. Obviously, this becomes a crime scene when
20 somebody is killed.

21 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: Sure.

22 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And so they are
23 working on it right now to try to figure out exactly
24 what happened, what caused it, but I have heard some
25 ideas of what may have caused it. I'm hearing what

1 you're hearing.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: Okay.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So as soon as we
4 have all of those details, I would be happy to have
5 somebody sit down with you and go over it. Plus, we
6 will want to do that, as well.

7 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: Oh, I have no
8 doubt; and I do appreciate it. But being a matter
9 of local interest for my regional --

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

11 REPRESENTATIVE SCHWEYER: -- delegation,
12 I appreciate that.

13 Switching gears. You know, I serve on
14 the Board of Directors for LANTA, the now-fourth
15 largest transit agency because a couple of them
16 merged into one. I am worried about long-term
17 funding for mass transit, not just LANTA, but across
18 the area -- across the Commonwealth.

19 Between Act 44 and Act 89, both of
20 them -- Act 89 only, you know, a few years away from
21 being at the end. Act 44 dollars going from the
22 Commonwealth having to pick up the mass transit
23 costs through the General Fund or through some other
24 derivative.

25 Can you talk about some of your long-term

1 plans, next five, 10, 15 years, but what we need to
2 be doing to make sure our mass transit is fully
3 funded?

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. So when I was
5 first asked, you know, what are the challenges; this
6 is one of the challenges. This is one of the
7 biggest challenges we have to deal with. And when I
8 was answering Representative Krueger-Braneky's
9 question, I didn't have time to get into this, but
10 now I do, as well.

11 So we're also -- the Turnpike is
12 conducting two studies and we are partnering with
13 SEPTA on one of them, and we are partnering with the
14 Allegheny Port Authority on the other one. And what
15 those studies are aimed at is seeing what does the
16 Turnpike look like as this funding, the \$450 million
17 obligation from the Turnpike for transit, if it does
18 not stop at 2022 when it is supposed to, but also,
19 what is SEPTA going to look like?

20 And what is the Port of Allegheny County
21 -- we are going to take from those reports and
22 obviously see how it impacts the rest of the State,
23 but we thought that was a good place for us to
24 start. But it is -- it will have a significant
25 impact. And we have to figure out where the

1 sustainable money, where the revenues are going to
2 come from.

3 I can say one thing for sure, the way the
4 Turnpike is operating is not sustainable right now.
5 Again, we can't keep raising our tolls. And the way
6 our transit is operating, while they feel good right
7 now, if that \$450 million payment, dedicated payment
8 stops, everybody is going to feel it. And so we are
9 looking at that.

10 We also have our Technical Advisory
11 Committee right now conducting a study to look at
12 what are the other -- just like they did for Act
13 89 -- what are the other funding options?

14 And this was a topic that was brought to
15 us from Senator Rafferty's office, led by the
16 Chairman of the Senate Committee. And also it was
17 brought to us by Representative Taylor and Chairman
18 Taylor's office, as well. They sit -- they're
19 representatives on this Committee.

20 And so it's good for us to take a look,
21 see what the options are. We know that we can't
22 deal with this problem in 2022, when it will be here
23 before us. We need to start dealing with it now,
24 seeing what our options are. I'm sure many people
25 in this room will all be sitting around, whether

1 it's in a hearing environment or in a roundtable
2 environment and discussing, you know, what is the
3 best way to move forward?

4 But we know that millions and millions of
5 people rely on transit to get around, and we want
6 them to continue to be able to get around. And it's
7 a vital part of our transportation network. So
8 those are three things that we're doing right now.

9 MR. SCHWEYER: Thank you very much for
10 that.

11 And one very last point. When you're in
12 your conversations with Amtrak, the third largest
13 region of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has no
14 access to rail whatsoever. It takes me an hour and
15 15 minutes to drive to 30th Street Station, give or
16 take. And when I met with some of the Amtrak folks,
17 they conveniently left out the Lehigh Valley, which
18 is, again, the third fastest growing region in the
19 area, for any rail service.

20 So any help you can give in advocating
21 for our region would be appreciated. Thank you,
22 Madam Secretary.

23 Thank you Mr. Chairman.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I will be doing
25 that.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
2 Boback.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Madam Secretary.

4 Well, I will be the third legislator now
5 to complain about the drivers license centers. And
6 I'm sorry to be redundant, but it's pothole time, so
7 of course we're inundated with questions and
8 complaints about potholes, but thank you for that
9 hotline. That's been an asset in my office.

10 But the drivers license centers, there's
11 got to be more time. There's got to be more
12 availability. I even thought maybe if you condensed
13 that to save money with a district office or
14 somehow, some way, I know it's always a cost
15 variable, and also increasing staff, but that's a
16 big thing. I mean, a lot of people who use our
17 roadways, who pay taxes, who buy the gas, they don't
18 complain about much, but when I get complaints about
19 that, I have to take notice.

20 I also want to ask, your employees at the
21 centers, are they trained for customer service and
22 courtesy?

23 I've always had great experiences there,
24 but I don't always hear that. They are trained
25 for --

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: They are. Of
2 course, if we hear about a bad experience, we follow
3 up. But look, I agree with you, our drivers license
4 centers, we hear about people going in, they're
5 waiting longer or they have issues, but it's also
6 the area where I get the greatest positive feedback,
7 where people are treated with kindness. I've had
8 people come in who, you know, have trouble, maybe
9 they're elderly, to get through the process, and the
10 person that they're dealing with at the drivers
11 license center takes the extra time or they'll see
12 that someone is very nervous or they're bringing in
13 a relative with a disability and they need a little
14 extra help. So it is definitely one of the high
15 points, as well, for reaching out.

16 I do try to go out, whether it's a
17 maintenance facility or a drivers license center, to
18 thank our employees who go above and beyond. And
19 the drivers license centers, you know, get a lot of
20 my attention for that. And I'm happy to recognize
21 those employees. That's not to say, you know, that
22 everybody does the best that they can do on every
23 single day.

24 And so please, if your office gets word
25 that someone wasn't treated in the way that they

1 should be, you know, our goal is to treat everybody
2 and put the customer first every time they walk into
3 that drivers license center. So we want to correct
4 that. And we do want to look at it, and I'm happy
5 to give more information on what we are doing, but
6 it is an area that we are trying to improve on
7 customer service, not just the service, but the
8 experience that the customer has once they come into
9 one of our facilities. It's very important.

10 I know Representative Briggs mentioned
11 Norristown. That's one of the latest ones that
12 we've improved. We've done a lot of -- we've taken
13 a lot of effort, not just to improve the IT and the
14 service that someone gets, but we've also decorated
15 it with local street signs. We've made it part of
16 the character.

17 We've had school contests that create
18 drawings and murals, and we put that up there.
19 We're very proud to be part of these neighborhoods
20 and we're looking to increase the experience.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: And I'm glad to
22 hear that, but those complaints are few and far
23 between. The big complaints are got to have more
24 hours, got to have more days, got to have more
25 people to give drivers license, maybe to hook up

1 with a school, but that's huge.

2 I'm a rural legislator, so I really have
3 to pay, you know, attention to what I'm hearing
4 about that.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. I do think
6 the increase with the third party testers is going
7 to improve a lot. We're looking to extend that to
8 100, over 100 different third party testers.

9 As you can imagine, a lot of the people
10 that go into those centers are going in to take a
11 test or something related to that. And so if we can
12 help divert some of that volume, we can do the other
13 services that are provided. It's really a multiple,
14 you know, it's a problem that will be solved on
15 multiple fronts.

16 So we have to do as much as we can do in
17 the physical buildings. We have to, when we can,
18 increase service and increase employees, as well as
19 counter service where that's possible, but then also
20 look to other things that we can do outside of the
21 building, which is increase the third party testers
22 and allow people to have other options, you know, if
23 they don't have to be in that center, to get the
24 services somewhere else.

25 So we're looking at it, you know, in a

1 multiple variety of ways.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Thank you. And
3 if I can help you in any way, I certainly will.

4 Another question with the CDL license.
5 In my area, Luzerne County Community College was
6 offering, I guess, the ability to go and get
7 training for CDL. I'm not quite sure exactly what
8 happened, except I did have a major complaint about
9 a person who had to go back and retake the test, but
10 had to retake the entire test.

11 In other words, they passed the written
12 part and there was a snafu with the driving, but
13 they were told, no, you have to go back and take the
14 entire test over again. And this is a gentleman who
15 has a job, but of course, now, because of having to
16 take the written test and certainly the driving test
17 again, everybody understands that. I mean, we want
18 safe drivers on the road.

19 But is there something with CDL that
20 that, in fact, is what happens?

21 SECRETARY REDDING: It's my
22 understanding -- I'm going to go back and make sure
23 I've been briefed on this particular issue. It's my
24 understanding that that particular tester -- you
25 know, safety comes first in everything we do. And

1 it was brought to our attention that they did not
2 have the right -- they weren't doing it the way that
3 they should. They were giving licenses to those who
4 should not have gotten licenses.

5 And I don't know the exact details of
6 that, but I do know that we thought it was necessary
7 to contact every single person that received a
8 license through that third party tester and retest
9 them the full test, so that we could be comfortable
10 that they would be on our roadways with our other
11 drivers who we want to protect.

12 Again, I don't know the details of why,
13 but as soon as that was brought to our attention,
14 for safety reasons, that's why we did that. And
15 that's unusual. That's not something we've done
16 with other third party testers.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Thank you. I'm
18 with you; safety first.

19 Thank you, Madam Secretary.

20 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BOBACK: Thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
24 Daley.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thanks,

1 Mr. Chairman.

2 Secretary Richards --

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Hello.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: -- it's always
5 good to see you.

6 I don't think Representative Briggs is
7 here right at this moment, but I just want to second
8 what he said about everything that you're doing or
9 that PennDOT is doing in our area. We have
10 neighboring districts, so I'm sure that I enjoy some
11 of the same benefits that he does.

12 But I also want to just acknowledge the
13 work of District 6 leadership and employees because
14 I will tell you, we call them, they're responsive
15 and they've been just really terrific.

16 So I have two questions and I'll tell you
17 what the topics are and we'll let you figure out how
18 to answer them. One of them is just about the
19 State Police funding from the Motor Licensing Fund.
20 I know that the Governor's budget proposes
21 \$770 million, so that is a \$32 million reduction
22 from that fund.

23 And could you talk a little bit about how
24 that \$32 million is going to be spent?

25 And when I think of it, I also kind of

1 think that in some ways it's like a tube of
2 toothpaste, that when you squeeze it, things just --
3 it doesn't go away. It just creates other problems.

4 The other thing is, if you could just
5 comment briefly on the President's infrastructure
6 plan and how that's going to impact the State and
7 our local governments in projects. I have a
8 railroad bridge in the town I live in that has been
9 on the list since the early '90s, and it keeps
10 getting moved.

11 So I'm just curious what kind of impact
12 you see in how these projects are going to be able
13 to move forward, because the funding sounds like
14 it's going to be very different than what it has
15 been.

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Right. So let me
17 start with that one because that one is -- we don't
18 know. The President's infrastructure package has
19 been announced, but there's not a lot of -- I don't
20 know how -- there's not a lot in there that's
21 telling us where it's going. And so you know, we
22 are trying to make the most of it.

23 Again, I'm going to be in D.C. this
24 coming week with my counterparts across the country.
25 We are sitting down personally with Secretary Chao

1 to hear more details. We're very eager to hear
2 where that is going and to see, you know, what's
3 going on.

4 And then, your first part, which is the
5 part that I want to get into --

6 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: The other piece
7 was about the State Police funding for the --

8 SECRETARY REDDING: Yeah, yeah.

9 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: -- and the
10 \$32 million and --

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Got it. So what
12 we're able to do and what the Fiscal Code is
13 allowing us to do is it gets the State Police down
14 to the \$500 million cap where we can plan and do
15 things. So this is the first time in probably a
16 generation, if not generations, that we have been
17 able to dedicate funding to our maintenance
18 operations, as well as to our rural roads.

19 And we did do the announcement -- I know
20 I ran out of time. When Representative Dean asked
21 the question, I got a little sidetracked on safety,
22 but what this is allowing us to do, we've just
23 announced a \$300 million initiative that is helping
24 us with maintenance issues, particularly on our
25 roadways that have less than 3,000 vehicles a day.

1 And so they don't always rise to the top
2 because there's such a need on our interstates and
3 our national highway system. And then again, for
4 the first time, we have an allotment to maintenance.
5 So it's being parsed out a little bit between
6 maintenance, between rural roads, as well as our
7 partnerships with municipalities.

8 That amount will grow. And that's what's
9 allowing us, part of what's allowing us -- it's an
10 increase in revenues coming in, but also that's
11 allowing us to do this new \$300 million initiative
12 that has been announced in the Governor's budget
13 this year. Again, where we're going to be
14 partnering with industry, looking at posted and
15 bonded roads in some of our rural areas, where we
16 are making sure this money gets out to our
17 districts, District 6 as well as the 11 other
18 districts -- 10 other districts there that I get
19 caught up in, as well.

20 We're making sure that they're using it
21 in the ways that they need to, again, maintaining
22 our pavement cycles, making sure also, you know, our
23 equipment -- you know, our current equipment cycle
24 is to run a truck until it's 14 years old.

25 Well, at 14 years old, it has quite the

1 high cost of maintaining it, of repairing it, and
2 there's not much life left in it. So we're looking
3 at shortening those cycles, so we get really the
4 bang for our buck. So that's where that money is
5 going.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: So is some of it
7 going to go into this highway system and technology
8 innovation?

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: The highways -- I'm
10 glad you asked about that.

11 So the highway systems and technology
12 innovation is money that was always available, but
13 it was in our maintenance category. I thought it
14 was important to put it in a separate line item so
15 people saw it. I wanted to be more transparent
16 about it, of how we're using it.

17 I wanted to talk about it more. It was
18 kind of hidden before. And I wanted to make sure,
19 particularly, that businesses saw it. It's very
20 important to the Amazons, to the warehouse, you
21 know, industry, to people who rely on freight, to
22 know that we are investing in ITS and allowing the
23 movements in Pennsylvania to move as efficiently and
24 effectively as possible, because we want to attract
25 businesses.

1 We want to make sure they want to locate
2 here in Pennsylvania. And we want them to see that
3 our transportation network is modernizing and we are
4 interested in helping our businesses, as well.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Just one last
6 comment. This is really fast.

7 PennDOT provided a chart of all of the
8 different places where the funding comes from. And
9 one of our staff said it's just a fabulous tool.

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Oh, thank you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: I thought that I
12 should pass that on.

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Parts of the chart
14 existed before I got here, but trust me, it's not
15 easy to understand a \$10 billion budget, and the
16 charts help me out, as well. So I'm glad that you
17 enjoyed it.

18 I agree, our staff does a very nice job.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thank you.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Very good.
21 Representative Grove.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Good morning.

23 How are you?

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Good. How are you?

25 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Good.

1 First, I just want to start off with PLA.

2 What is the status of that?

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I am not allowed to
4 respond because of current litigation, but I believe
5 I will be able to respond soon.

6 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay.

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And I will follow up
8 with you when I can.

9 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay. I
10 appreciate that.

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: My chief counsel
12 will not let me say more.

13 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: I got it. Can't
14 make the attorneys unhappy, right?

15 Can you give us just a 30-second response
16 on transit mergers?

17 I know our own Rabbit Transit has done a
18 lot of mergers. They're looking at going with CAT.
19 We have Lackawanna Transit, Luzerne County.

20 What's the status of that?

21 And are we getting a return on our
22 investment with those mergers?

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, we absolutely
24 are. It's been a fabulous incentive that was
25 provided in Act 89. And we're very happy that three

1 regional transit agencies have taken on the
2 consolidation. They're saving about \$5 million from
3 that consolidation, and we have three other areas
4 that have asked about it and are also consolidating.

5 It's so important that our transit
6 agencies spend the money where they need to spend
7 it. So when they can consolidate, they can use
8 economies of scale and their administration costs.
9 And that way they can use their money where they
10 need it most, which is often in their capital costs,
11 maintaining their fleets, buying new cars where they
12 need it, and making sure that the money that they
13 need to keep in a state of good repair, that they do
14 so.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay.

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So we're very
17 pleased that so many have taken advantage of that.
18 I'm happy to read off the list of those transit
19 agencies that have done so, if you would like that,
20 or I could just forward it to your office.

21 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: No, just send it
22 over. We don't need that.

23 I just know personally Rich, head of
24 Rabbit Transit. He's my neighbor. He's got a big
25 area. I worry about his mental health.

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes.

2 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: So don't put too
3 much on him.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, running a
5 transit agency or working for one is not for the
6 faint of heart.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Yes. Yes.

8 Two questions on the Turnpike Commission.
9 One is more of a personal pet peeve. Now that the
10 red and kind of like the traffic lights are gone, I
11 don't know if I'm actually paying the toll or not.

12 What's the process to kind of replace
13 that?

14 I go through and I'm like, did it click,
15 didn't it click?

16 Am I going to get a bill at the end of
17 the day?

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Are you getting a
19 bill at the end of the day?

20 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: I'm not.

21 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Then it clicked.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: So I'm good, but
23 what's -- just more of a mental psyche.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It's the change in
25 technology, and I do understand that. We have gone

1 to license plate readers. And when you don't pay,
2 you will get a bill in the mail. That has been, you
3 know, we're having success with that. So don't
4 sweat it, is what I'm saying.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay.

6 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And if nobody is
7 contacting you, then you're in good shape. But I
8 will take that back to the Commission and see --

9 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: I just like to see
10 the green, you paid.

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I understand.

12 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: It just --

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Like you start your
14 day with a little gold star, like you did something
15 right.

16 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Yeah. Yeah.

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I get it.

18 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Just something, I
19 just freak out every time I go through the tolls.

20 The other aspect of the Turnpike
21 Commission, obviously, outstanding debt is \$12.2
22 billion, Act 44, \$450 million of payments until
23 2122. By that time it's another \$1.8 billion and
24 just \$450 million on top of all the other costs with
25 bonding. So we're looking at \$14 billion.

1 Ridership dropped for the first time
2 starting in June because tolls are going up, you
3 know, I'm a believer in the law for curve. You
4 know, at a tax rate of zero, you're going to get no
5 revenue; tax rate of 100 percent, you're going to
6 get no revenue because, honestly, who's going to
7 work if all of your money is just going to go to the
8 government?

9 And then you have a bell curve. At some
10 point, there's a depreciating return of revenue.

11 Are we there on the Turnpike?

12 Should we be financially worried as tolls
13 -- I assume tolls will continue to rise to make
14 those payments.

15 Are we at a point of diminishing return?

16 And financially, you know, I don't know
17 if bankruptcy is the word or what's the reality
18 we're facing with the Turnpike and the bonding?

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, I'm going to
20 answer it from my point of view right now. I don't
21 think we're at that point yet, but I think we are on
22 our way. And as far as being worried, I am
23 extremely worried about it. That's why I think we
24 really have to take this issue on, and we have to
25 start now. We can't wait until 2022.

1 We are, right now, if you put all of the
2 transit, all of the tolling agencies throughout the
3 country in a chart -- and the Turnpike has done
4 this. If you haven't seen it, I'm happy to give it
5 to you -- and see where the Pennsylvania Turnpike
6 is.

7 We're a little bit to the right of the
8 center, but we're in the middle of the pack, but
9 when you look at ridership in our neighboring
10 States, when you look at the Ohio Turnpike -- I
11 actually just spoke to the Director of Ohio DOT
12 yesterday on this issue.

13 New Jersey, New York, they are all seeing
14 increased ridership, and we are not seeing increased
15 ridership. I don't know what that means, but we
16 have consultants looking at it to find out what that
17 means. All five Commissioners at the Turnpike are
18 very concerned about that, whether that was just a
19 weird coincidence, whether there are reasons for it.

20 We are continually raising our rates.
21 Within a year or two, we will be that chart that I
22 mentioned. We'll be on the far right of that chart.
23 We could be the farthest to the right of that chart
24 in a handful of years. So we do need to take a look
25 at it.

1 And I'm very worried and, obviously,
2 happy to keep you informed on it and listen to any
3 ideas that you might have.

4 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Yeah.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It's going to take a
6 lot of us to try to solve this one.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: I'm glad you're
8 worried because I know debt is -- it can be a
9 devastating effect. I look at businesses, local
10 governments. When that debt gets out of hand, there
11 is no way to get out of it, so I am glad. We need
12 to definitely do something on that.

13 Thank you.

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Madam
16 Secretary, Representative Grove is also Chairman of
17 the York MPO, so we rely on him to make sure my
18 roads are fixed in my district.

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I don't think I knew
20 that.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Also --

22 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I was also Chair of
23 my MPO at one point, so we have that in common.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: We are a
25 little concerned when Chairman Markosek retires that

1 that debt on the Turnpike is going to go higher
2 because he won't be paying all those tolls. So I
3 don't know what we're going to do in Pennsylvania.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: For all of those
5 retiring -- thank you for reminding me -- please
6 continue to buy your gas in Pennsylvania and pay
7 your tolls on the Turnpike. We are relying on it.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Very good.
9 Representative Kim.

10 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Secretary Richards,
11 over here.

12 Thank you so much for answering all of
13 our questions today. I have two questions. Most of
14 them have already been answered, thanks to you.

15 In a recent Transportation hearing, we
16 learned that there's a high delinquency rate on
17 unpaid Turnpike tolls and I wanted to know what your
18 plan was to recoup the loss.

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: And then my second
21 question is more of a curiosity question. A report
22 this year still says that PA has the second most
23 structurally deficient bridges in the country.

24 After Act 89 and all of the work that
25 you've been doing, when is the next evaluation?

1 And will we see our grade go up?

2 Thank you.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Okay. So the
4 Turnpike is actively going after people who don't
5 pay tolls and delinquencies. There are some
6 businesses that have the majority of that. Like
7 there are trucking firms, you know. So we're going
8 after them heavily, legally, you know, with our
9 chief counsel. We're working very carefully on
10 that.

11 We're also working with our other States
12 with reciprocity agreements, as well as how we can
13 go after, because some of -- you know, if they don't
14 live in Pennsylvania, it's harder for us. So
15 anyway, the answer is, we are actively going after
16 that. We want to make sure that everybody who uses
17 our asset pays for it.

18 And again, I'm happy to provide you with
19 more details of who those -- but it's surprising, of
20 the total amount, it really, the majority of it is,
21 you know, within five to 10 people. Yeah, very
22 high -- there are repeat offenders, as you can
23 imagine.

24 But we want to go after everybody, and we
25 are doing so.

1 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Can you tell us
2 their names, just so that we can publicly shame
3 them?

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I'll ask the
5 Turnpike. I would imagine that's public knowledge.
6 I'm not sure, but I'll ask the Turnpike. I would be
7 happy to hand out those names if I'm allowed to.

8 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Cool.

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And then, your other
10 question was with Act 89 and just --

11 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Our grade for
12 bridges.

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Oh, right,
14 structurally deficient bridges. Okay. I actually
15 wrote that one down, but couldn't read my own
16 handwriting.

17 Our structurally deficient bridges --
18 look, I'm proud that we're no longer number one,
19 we're number two. A lot of that is because of the
20 age of our infrastructure and the number. Of all
21 DOTs, we have the third largest number of
22 structurally -- of bridges.

23 I'm very proud of where we've come in a
24 very short amount of time. From 2008, we've been
25 able to reduce the amount of structurally deficient

1 bridges, which was over 6,000, to very close to
2 3,000. So we've been able to cut it in half. And
3 that's because we have aggressively gone after those
4 bridges.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I'm extremely proud
6 of the fact that in the three years since I've been
7 sitting in this seat and that the Governor Wolf has
8 been there, we have fixed -- we have taken 1,600
9 bridges off the structurally deficient bridge list.
10 We've also tended to 19,000 miles of roadway, which
11 again, I'm very proud of our teams for doing that.

12 In addition, with the P-3, with the 558
13 bridges, those will be removed off of the
14 structurally deficient list, as well. We continue
15 to do that, but we have to remain aggressive because
16 every year, 200 to 250 new bridges get added to that
17 list. So it is a constant struggle.

18 So we have to fix many, many bridges to
19 keep that number going down. As you can imagine,
20 the bridges that are left on that list are some of
21 our more complex bridges. The ones that were very
22 easy to fix got fixed earlier in the process. And
23 so now we have some of our more complex bridges, and
24 they will take a little bit longer.

25 We are dedicated to keeping that number

1 going down. We actually just had some very positive
2 reenforcement on where we are with our bridges. And
3 so you know, we continue to work on it, but we're
4 very proud of our track record and others are
5 noticing, as well.

6 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Thank you for all
7 you do.

8 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thanks.

9 REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Thank you, Chairman.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
11 Dunbar.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DUNBAR: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 Welcome, Secretary. Good to see you
15 again.

16 It is a budget hearing and a lot of our
17 focus is always on the General Fund. And I know not
18 a whole lot of your dollars are shown in the General
19 Fund, but last year during the budget process, your
20 funds certainly came into crosshairs of trying to
21 balance the final budget with discussions about
22 taking money out of special funds.

23 We had a hearing -- I believe
24 Representative Braneky had mentioned it, as well --
25 we had a hearing a few months ago, where we talked

1 about that. And I think it's only fair that
2 everybody hears exactly what has come about because
3 of that.

4 Last year, the PT -- the Public
5 Transportation Trust Fund had a balance of
6 \$470 million in it. In two years, the projections
7 in the Governor's budget has it going down to
8 \$58 million. That was based upon our discussions
9 that we had had and you had told us about committed
10 funds.

11 I think maybe we had just had a lack of
12 understanding of exactly what a committed fund was.
13 And for everybody's edification, I would use the
14 term, something like work in progress, cost to
15 complete, something like that. So you've provided
16 us with information of current projects going out
17 over the next several years which show a dramatic
18 increase in spending, which we understand is based
19 on Act 89.

20 We also show the drawdown of those funds.
21 And I just wanted to make sure everybody heard that
22 because I don't think we ever really published any
23 final results from that. So I didn't know if you
24 had any comments on that.

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Again, I found that

1 discussion to be a good one. We had a lot of
2 positive feedback from that. I think we explained
3 why the funds have money in them, you know. There
4 is no business that functions in a healthy way that
5 draws down their books to zero every year. I mean,
6 as a business owner, I would never do that.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DUNBAR: The Multimodal
8 Fund does go to zero, I believe, if you look at it.

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, that's a grant
10 program, so that is a little bit different. Those
11 are grants that we are able to provide every year.
12 That's not how we operate. You know, that's not how
13 rail and aviation operate.

14 So it's very important that those funds
15 allow us to function in a healthy way.

16 REPRESENTATIVE DUNBAR: And like I said,
17 I didn't really have any general question on it, I
18 just thought it was imperative that we let everybody
19 know that that's a road we don't want to go back and
20 visit again this year.

21 Switching gears real quickly back. As
22 you know, I'm from the western part of the State and
23 the Turnpike actually goes through the middle of my
24 district and there have been some discussions in the
25 past about evaluating several different locations

1 along the Turnpike for all automated interchange.

2 Is that anything that's still being
3 discussed or thought about?

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We're doing some
5 pilot programs now, just to see how it impacts us.

6 Is there cost savings involved, and what
7 does that mean -- we have made guarantees not to cut
8 any jobs right now. And as we continue to look at
9 that, we're making sure that, again, no jobs are
10 lost. Everything is being looked at until we can
11 fully evaluate.

12 But I will say, you know, other toll
13 authorities, that is the general movement of where
14 they're going. It allows them to expand and keep
15 their functioning. And as has been mentioned here
16 many times, we just have to take a look at
17 everything, that the Turnpike is in a tough
18 challenge right now.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DUNBAR: I understand.
20 And I do believe that a shameless, baseless plug for
21 one in my neck of the woods would certainly increase
22 ridership and certainly ease some of the problems in
23 Representative Markosek's district, as well.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And that's what it
25 does allow us to do, is it allows us to do what we

1 used to call slip ramps, but it allows us to allow
2 people to get on and off a little easier when we can
3 use that technology.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DUNBAR: Thank you.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
6 O'Brien.

7 REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 Madam Secretary, good to see you.

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Good to see you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN: Now, I was a
12 little tardy this morning, so this topic may have
13 been taken up. But that's okay, it's worthy to go
14 over a second time.

15 A couple of months ago, I had the thrill
16 of joining you and Governor Wolf and Mayor Kenney
17 and Chairman Taylor and Chairman Keller on the banks
18 of I-95 at Penn's Landing, where we had a
19 conversation about decking over top of I-95 and
20 having it bevel down to the river and joining the
21 city with the river.

22 Now, I would like you to talk about that
23 for a second. And I would like to have you talk
24 about the magnificence of transportation and
25 esthetics and if there are any such projects around

1 the State. If you could address that, I would
2 appreciate it.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I would like to. It
4 has not been asked yet, so thank you for asking.

5 One of the initiatives that I'm most
6 proud of under the Wolf Administration, I am the
7 first planner to lead PennDOT, and it's very
8 important to me that all of our transportation
9 projects work within the communities where they are
10 located, so that it can provide, you know, it can
11 fit into where the community sees itself.

12 I always talk about that a dollar
13 invested in a PennDOT project is a dollar invested
14 in the community where it lives. And so for the
15 first time ever, through PennDOT Connects, we had
16 over 700 meetings for 2,000 projects, to take a look
17 at where the design is; where are the comp plans;
18 what's important in economic development; where are
19 the freight connections important; where are the
20 transit connections; what are mobility options; and
21 what are the environmental issues?

22 So we're very pleased. We're seeing more
23 gateway projects. We're seeing where we can help
24 while we invest in our project, but we can also help
25 a county do their trail project, where we can help a

1 community with other issues that it's been dealing
2 with with the businesses and give them access,
3 things that we didn't always take into account.
4 Basically, we are listening.

5 We are going in and listening to our
6 communities so that we can be better designers and
7 develop better communities. The specific project
8 that you mentioned falls into this new initiative.
9 And that is where we are helping this area in
10 Philadelphia create a landscaped area that connects
11 it to the water.

12 I-95 is built on all structure in
13 Philadelphia and southeastern Pennsylvania. That's
14 why it's very expensive to fix, but that's also why
15 it blocks it from the water. You can't see the
16 water from Philadelphia from where you are in many
17 places. So we're trying to help correct that while
18 we fix I-95.

19 Part of any transportation project,
20 particularly one of this scale, is that there is
21 also environmental mitigation that has to happen.
22 When I-95 was first built, part of the interstate
23 program under President Eisenhower, quite some time
24 ago, environmental issues were not at the forefront.
25 They weren't always thought about.

1 And that's why we have so many storm
2 water issues right now, and that's why we have a lot
3 of flooding. We have issues with our resilience and
4 sustainability and our assets. So by looking and
5 seeing what this community needs, which is a
6 connection to the water, but also knowing that we
7 need environmental mitigation, particularly storm
8 water issues as part of the I-95 project, we were
9 able to work with the City.

10 We were able to work with the
11 William Penn Foundation. We were able to share the
12 cost. Normally, that would have been totally on
13 PennDOT's back, but we were able to identify this
14 and we're very proud to be part of this project.

15 Philadelphia will get 11 extra acres of
16 green space. You will be able to see from the
17 historic areas of Philadelphia down to the river. A
18 lot of people in Philadelphia who come in to visit
19 don't live in Philadelphia.

20 So people who don't know the area may not
21 know that the Delaware River is right there within
22 arm's length and they can enjoy what the river
23 provides. So we're very excited about that project
24 and, again, working with private partners and
25 sharing the cost of it, as well. It's really a

1 win-win for everybody, as we continue to improve
2 I-95 at the same time.

3 REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN: Thank you,
4 Madam Secretary.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
6 Quinn.

7 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 It's great to see you again,
10 Madam Secretary.

11 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It's great to see
12 you.

13 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: First, I would be
14 remiss if I didn't congratulate and thank SEPTA for
15 the great job they did for the Eagles parade, to be
16 able to turn within, I think 36 hours or so, of
17 having schedules out and great communication. It
18 was impressive. I have yet to have heard one flaw
19 from the day.

20 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Wonderful.

21 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Okay. A couple of
22 things I would like to cover here.

23 One, the nation has done a great job with
24 the higher CAFE standards in terms of, you know,
25 making sure -- cleaner roadways. Okay?

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Right.

2 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: That being said,
3 the downside of that is our motor license -- gas tax
4 and all of that.

5 Where do you see it going from a PennDOT
6 planning point of view?

7 Do you see, with more hybrid and electric
8 cars, what do we do to try to recoup that money?

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. I also sit on
10 the Board of the Transportation Research Board.
11 It's part of the National Academies of the Sciences
12 and Health and Medicine, and they take on some very
13 serious research, national research projects.

14 And one of them that I'm involved in
15 right now is electrification, which is part of your
16 question. Where we see vehicles moving, we do see
17 them moving toward cleaner fuels. And we encourage
18 that, obviously.

19 I actually got into Transportation after
20 working for the EPA and working on air quality
21 issues, so these are very important to me, as well.
22 We're also investing through P-3 and compressed
23 natural gas, giving transit agencies the opportunity
24 to have fueling stations available to them where
25 they are.

1 We're looking at, again, electrical
2 charging stations, as well, for electrification.

3 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: My bill, 1446, is
4 to build out along the Turnpike.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Exactly. That's
6 really important. We want to encourage the use of
7 those vehicles, but as you very appropriately tied
8 it together, it impacts how much gas is being
9 purchased, right, and we are relying on that tax to
10 fund our transportation.

11 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Right.

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: So with cars
13 becoming more fuel efficient and with people opting
14 either not to own cars at all or to own cleaner
15 cars, we cannot rely -- it's not a funding stream
16 that we will be able to rely on in 15 years from now
17 like we can now. So we have to take a look at that.

18 We are part of the I-95 Corridor
19 Coalition. They are taking on a regional study of
20 all of the States along I-95, from Florida to Maine,
21 of what a mileage-based user fee would look like.

22 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: That's where I'm
23 going, too.

24 Is that --

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Okay. So we're

1 going to the same place. Wonderful.

2 So we are -- I'm a vice-chair of that
3 Coalition.

4 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Of course.

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: When you're part of
6 Pennsylvania, you get asked. And I love all of
7 those opportunities. I don't like to say no. So
8 I'm very proud to sit on that Board, as well.

9 And the data that they will collect will
10 be extremely useful for us. We do not know if the
11 mileage-based user fee, you know, how it will impact
12 us.

13 What would the rate have to be here?

14 What would the rate have to be to bring
15 in the same amount of money as the gas tax?

16 So that's the data we're looking at.

17 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: I knew we had a
18 Federal grant for that.

19 Has it started yet, that study?

20 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes. We have been
21 awarded two grants for that.

22 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Okay.

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We're starting a
24 smaller study. It's actually being started right
25 now. And Pennsylvania volunteers, I believe, will

1 have 25 participating in that study.

2 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Okay.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And then next year,
4 it should expand. We should have several hundred
5 drivers in Pennsylvania. And it will be good for us
6 to participate because then we'll know exactly how
7 it could impact Pennsylvania driving habits.

8 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: I volunteer.

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Wonderful.

10 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: So you talked
11 earlier and said gas and tolls are two issues. So
12 yes, we've had these tolls going up. I understand
13 the rationale for it, but the unintended consequence
14 has been people getting off of the Turnpike, driving
15 other roads.

16 I'm one who has gone to the Turnpike.
17 For 10 years, I drove 78 to come to Harrisburg. And
18 now it scares the daylights out of me because of the
19 increased truck traffic. I see that coming down as
20 far as in my district, people pointing out that
21 they're not taking the Turnpike. They're going to
22 do 78 to the northeast extension.

23 And I'm seeing in different parts of my
24 district and throughout Bucks County increased truck
25 traffic that, where did it come from? We tie it

1 back to the tolls.

2 What tools, or what additional tools, can
3 we give our local municipalities to say, get out?

4 Do you see any like that?

5 I mean, I was recently speaking to some
6 people down in lower Bucks who said they have
7 tracked 350 trucks an hour coming through their
8 small, little town. And it's a direct result, in
9 their view, of the increased Turnpike tolls.

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It is. It is.

11 And look, it's trucks. Trucks are a big
12 issue. But also, where you and I live in
13 southeastern Pennsylvania, it's also used as a
14 commuter road. And as the tolls go up, that's also
15 causing people who would normally use it in a short
16 distance -- look, we're working with our
17 municipalities.

18 Obviously, not all of our roads and
19 bridges can handle that kind of truck traffic. So
20 where it's appropriate, we're making sure, you know,
21 where we have cause and reason to, not allowing
22 truck on certain roadways. Again, we're working
23 with municipalities to do that, but that is what
24 we're going to see as these tolls go up.

25 So while we talk about the health of the

1 Turnpike, it obviously has ramifications with
2 arterials off of the Turnpike, as well as the
3 communities who are nearby the Turnpike.

4 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: And our bridge
5 ways and all of that.

6 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We'll be working on
7 that, as well.

8 No, we don't have a quick solution for
9 that. And that's why, again, I think it's going to
10 take many things to solve this very serious funding
11 issue that we have looming ahead of us.

12 REPRESENTATIVE QUINN: Okay. Thank you.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Very good.

14 Before we move on to Chairman Markosek's
15 questions, I did want to recognize Dave Margolis,
16 who is back here.

17 David, you are retiring, I understand, in
18 July. After what, 43 years?

19 DIRECTOR MARGOLIS: Forty-four.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Forty-four
21 years. We want to thank you for your contribution
22 to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

23 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Absolutely.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR:

25 Congratulations.

1 (Round of applause.)

2 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I have to say, with
3 the comment when they asked -- you know, I'm sitting
4 here by myself. My super power is Dave Margolis.
5 He just -- I feel it. I feel him, you know.

6 He has educated me well. It feels good
7 to have him here with me.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Very good.
9 With that, Chairman Markosek.

10 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Thank you,
11 Chairman.

12 Very briefly. And the gentlelady that
13 just spoke about additional traffic because of the
14 tolls and whatnot, just a reminder, a long time ago,
15 a long, long time ago, when we did Act 44, we had
16 planned to toll Interstate 80, which we have a lot
17 of traffic now that uses it instead of the Turnpike.

18 So that's a whole other issue, I know,
19 and I don't want to get into that right now. And
20 that's not going to happen any time soon, but I did
21 want to remind members that we've looked at those
22 kinds of things.

23 The other thing I just wanted to say is a
24 message, and we earlier talked about -- and I know
25 the Chair is also interested -- the whole idea of

1 distracted driving and the whole idea of safety of
2 workers out on the PennDOT and Turnpike, et cetera.
3 SB 172 passed the Senate Committee, and it is a bill
4 that would provide a pilot program for speed
5 cameras, I believe, on the Turnpike.

6 So I just want to alert all the members,
7 if you're really interested in safety and you're
8 really interested in saving lives and getting people
9 to behave when they drive, this is a bill that I
10 think would do that. And I would urge the support
11 of all the members when this bill comes to the
12 floor. And I would urge the leadership to run the
13 bill and urge the support of all the members to vote
14 for that bill as a pilot program.

15 I think it would be a start in saving
16 lives. Thank you.

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We strongly support
18 it. And speeding is an issue and a large
19 contributing factor to the fatalities we do have.
20 So anything we can do to get people to drive within
21 the speed limits and to be aware of what speed
22 they're going, because how often -- I hear it anyway
23 when I review issues -- oh, I didn't realize I was
24 going that fast.

25 Anything we can do to remind people.

1 Even if they think a camera is there, we have seen
2 that they will slow down. So anything that will
3 impact that is valuable, so thank you.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
5 Greiner.

6 REPRESENTATIVE GREINER: Thanks,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 Good afternoon, Madam Secretary. I think
9 I'm going to be quicker than some of my other
10 colleagues.

11 I wanted to talk to you about the Motor
12 License Fund and the State Police funding issue
13 because I get questions in my office about this. I
14 know others probably do. And the Motor License Fund
15 portion of the State Police budget has grown 57
16 percent, from \$512 million in 2009-10 to
17 \$802 million in '16-'17, an increase of \$290 million
18 or 57 percent.

19 The General Assembly has been able to
20 stop the bleeding in the Fiscal Code by capping the
21 State Police budget out of the Motor License Fund at
22 \$802 million for '17-'18 and then reducing it by
23 about four percent every year, about \$32 million per
24 year, until it reaches \$500 million over a 10-year
25 period.

1 And not only did that change reduce
2 maximum State Police funding out of the
3 Motor License Fund, it also stopped the rapid
4 growth, which was growing about nine percent per
5 year for the three years leading up to the fiscal
6 year change.

7 Proposed funding out of the Motor License
8 Fund for the State Police is \$770 million for the
9 upcoming year, '18-'19. And it's right at the
10 statutorily authorized cap or 96 percent of the
11 \$802 million.

12 Can you explain to the Committee what
13 this Fiscal Code change means to the State Police
14 budget, what it means in new dollars as it helps you
15 out, in reflection of the PennDOT budget, as well as
16 how this might impact construction and maintenance
17 schedules in years ahead?

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. It's been
19 tremendously helpful. I can't comment on State
20 Police, so I'm glad -- I do just want to start by
21 saying I strongly believe the State Police need to
22 be fully funded to do the public safety work that
23 they do. But we also need the funding that we need
24 out of the Motor License Fund to improve on our
25 transportation.

1 So that slow draw down over 10 years is
2 the basis of our Roadmap Program, which is a
3 \$2.1 billion investment in our -- \$1 billion is
4 going to our interstate system; and \$1.1 billion is
5 going out to our counties. A lot of that is being
6 used on our rural road network and helping us with
7 our maintenance.

8 Our county accreditation program for the
9 first time, we've had every single county, every
10 district has come in and produced a county
11 accreditation plan, so we can fully understand where
12 they are on maintenance. Just to remind you, and
13 I've said this in other budget hearings before,
14 maintenance has been held flat for a very long time
15 at PennDOT, which really means it's been reduced,
16 which means we can't take care of the assets that we
17 are in charge of and that is our responsibility.

18 We are now able to do that. Again,
19 getting into pavement cycles, going into lower ADT,
20 which just means lower volume roads that we see
21 every day, less than 3,000, that we can now invest
22 in those roadways, fixing those paving assets, as
23 well. And so it has allowed us to plan better. It
24 has allowed us to put a true focus on maintenance
25 that we have not had the funding to do before.

1 And it's really allowing us to take care
2 of our assets in a way that we were unable to do
3 before Act 89 and before the State Police issue was
4 addressed.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GREINER: I appreciate
6 that because I know, I mean, I do get questions.
7 And I'm sure if I do, others do also.

8 And I guess just a concluding remark, I,
9 as my one colleague from Philadelphia County and
10 Dauphin County, I believe rail is the future. I
11 think high speed rail definitely would be great for
12 economic growth. I understand we have a dollars
13 issue.

14 At least we finally have a presidential
15 administration who is interested in infrastructure
16 and moving forward. Maybe, you know, looking
17 forward, that's something that can be dealt with and
18 addressed. And I appreciate, you know, talking to
19 our congressional members to try to do so because
20 it's unfortunate in Lancaster County. We can't even
21 get a bridge fixed, you know, that's on the waiting
22 list for six or seven years because of the fight
23 between Amtrak and utilities and everything else.

24 So we have challenges, but that is the
25 future. And if Pennsylvania wants to grow, we need

1 to get to that point, so thank you.

2 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
4 Kampf.

5 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Secretary
6 Richards, I think it's good afternoon.

7 So I drove down North Valley Road today
8 and was presently surprised by some excellent
9 pothole work, so thank you very much.

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We are out there
11 when we can be.

12 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: The roadway crew
13 was out there.

14 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Just a warning, this
15 is going to be a tough pothole season.

16 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Yeah. So that was
17 great.

18 This is about highway occupancy and
19 right-of-way permitting. You know, I've just heard
20 sort of a couple of comments in the land development
21 context, I guess, in the last year. So it's not
22 terribly scientific, but there are lengthy waiting
23 periods, perhaps as much as a year.

24 And there seems to be a perception that
25 it happens a lot faster out west than it does in the

1 eastern part of the State. So I don't know if this
2 is something you all are tracking or if I'm way off
3 base, but that's my question.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Well, first of all,
5 if you have details on specific projects, let us
6 know so we can look into it. Each area has
7 different complications, depending on what's needed
8 in the permit. And there's a lot of back and forth.
9 So when you say it could take a year, it's not that
10 someone doesn't submit something or they don't hear
11 something for a year, it's usually information going
12 back and forth to make that decision.

13 But we try to be as consistent as we can
14 across the State, so that's something, you know,
15 I'll definitely go back and take a look at, see if
16 what you're hearing is because of an individual
17 instance where something was a little more
18 problematic or complex than the typical project.
19 But you know, then again, there aren't many typical
20 projects. Everything usually has something that's
21 unusual with it.

22 But we can take a look at it. You know,
23 our goal is to make that permitting process,
24 obviously, as thorough as possible so we can get to
25 the right decision at the end of that process. And

1 we do try to make it as efficient as possible, so we
2 would want to see where there were hang-ups and we
3 might be able to make that go a little faster.

4 If there's something we can learn from
5 out west, we want to check that out, as well.

6 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: I don't know
7 whether you do, but perhaps maybe you should, even
8 though the projects are, I'm sure, different. Each
9 one is different.

10 Perhaps you know an average time that
11 somebody waits. I don't know if that would be
12 useful, but if you do have --

13 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We may already have
14 that data.

15 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Okay.

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: If not, we'll
17 definitely take a look at it, but we may already be
18 looking at that. Again, we can follow up with you
19 if you want to find out more about some of the
20 details.

21 REPRESENTATIVE KAMPF: Thank you.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: I want to
23 recognize a gentleman who has been long -- one of
24 the most respected members of the General Assembly.

25 Representative Dunbar, oh my God.

1 You know, I've got to be honest. I told
2 you that Representative Grove chairs the York MPO
3 and I used to chair that, as well. I learned a lot
4 from Representative Taylor, who is about to ask you
5 some questions, I'm sure, but I fear losing
6 Chairman Markosek and Chairman Taylor and
7 Chairman Keller, who are going to be our advocates
8 for good highways in the future.

9 So with that, I recognize a great man,
10 John Taylor.

11 Representative.

12 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 Am I last?

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: You're not
16 last.

17 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Okay. I don't
18 want to separate everybody from lunch, but thank you
19 for having me today. I think there have been a lot
20 of answers to my questions.

21 But Secretary, thank you very much. It's
22 been great to work with you and your team. We don't
23 always move legislation that your gang loves, but I
24 think we also move legislation that you need. We'll
25 try to continue to do that.

1 I would just like to echo comments of
2 Chairman Markosek about the speed cameras. I think
3 that bill is ready to go. I think that does solve
4 some of the problem with injuries and deaths along
5 those highways.

6 And as well, Representative Quinn's
7 comments about our parade and PennDOT and the SEPTA.
8 To move 700,000 to 1.2 million people for an event
9 that lasted three hours in addition to the one
10 million rides that that agency provides every day is
11 pretty remarkable.

12 And then Representative Daley mentioned
13 District 6. And you know, we, Representative
14 O'Brien and I, represent the area where 95 is being
15 reconstructed. It's not being repaved. It's being
16 reconstructed, and there are a host of issues that
17 occur. And when we call Chuck Davies or
18 Elaine Elbich or any of that team, I mean, they're
19 right on it and we really appreciate it.

20 So my questions were answered in terms of
21 the Motor License Fund and Federal infrastructure
22 things. I would just like you to distinguish the
23 Infrastructure Trust Fund and how that may not be
24 under PennDOT's jurisdiction, maybe clear that up
25 for folks.

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Do you mean the
2 Federal Infrastructure Trust Fund or what --

3 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: No.

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Or the bank?

5 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: No, the TIF.

6 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Oh, the
7 transportation.

8 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Yes.

9 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes, yes, yes. Yes,
10 the TIF.

11 So the TIF is money that each Governor
12 receives. And it has been going on for many
13 administrations. It's \$25 million a year, so \$100
14 million in a term. And it can be directed toward
15 transportation projects that have a direct economic
16 development impact, which quite frankly, are many
17 transportation projects. I think they all have some
18 economic development impact.

19 There's a Governors Action Team, and I
20 know that that existed in the last administration.
21 I don't know how many Governors have used that or
22 not, but they take a look at all the projects that
23 are needed as they come in and evaluate the economic
24 impact. I think they also look to see and leverage,
25 you know, what private money, you know, where can

1 that money be best invested?

2 And so it is looked at very differently
3 than our 12-year program, which is to go through the
4 MPOs, to go through the RPOs, to plan, you know,
5 long term. This is money that an administration can
6 use without going through all of those steps and use
7 it where it's really needed. And there are always
8 very valuable projects that come up that may not
9 have been known 12 years ago or may not have been
10 known when the 12-year plan was being put together.

11 So that's where the TIF funds are right
12 now. I don't know exactly where they are in
13 allocating all of those, but I know that the
14 Governor's Action Team has been working very
15 seriously on those projects because our Agency, as
16 well as DCED and others, have gotten calls to weigh
17 in so that they can fully understand what's needed
18 and where they can best invest that money.

19 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: And those lists,
20 I guess that would come more from DCED?

21 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I believe that's
22 where -- yeah, I believe that's how it gets
23 announced. Again, we can loop back and find that
24 out, but that's the agency that would --

25 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: If that's

1 something that your folks would have, I would
2 appreciate having it.

3 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. Absolutely.

4 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: If it's DCED,
5 we'll look there, too. Thank you.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Before I go to
8 the second round, I've given Representative Heffley
9 and Representative Donatucci each the opportunity to
10 ask one more question, but before they do, I'm going
11 to put a little lob in for York County, since the
12 southeast seems to be taking all of the money here.

13 I was telling Chairman Markosek, I don't
14 know if there's any money left for our districts.
15 Just kidding.

16 I think that one of the concerns I had
17 expressed last year was the concern I have in York
18 County with I-83, which has been shut down almost
19 multiple times each week. And we do have a study
20 that moves it to six lanes, or at least parts of it
21 to six lanes. Hopefully, we can move that forward
22 rather quickly, but my biggest concern is the safety
23 of the children and the communities that are
24 alongside 83.

25 Basically, the concern I have is when

1 there are shutdowns, the road is closed completely.
2 A lot of those communities along 83 are rural areas,
3 small towns who are not capable of, you know, just
4 not able to be able to manage all that traffic. And
5 I'm kind of disappointed that the State Police and
6 the Transportation individuals who are involved
7 sometimes, mostly the State Police, and I understand
8 that, have not called out the local fire police to
9 help manage the traffic and the flow.

10 I remember last year, I believe it was,
11 when I-83 was closed on the bridge here, coming into
12 Harrisburg. Lemoyne and New Cumberland and those
13 municipalities, I saw school buses, children, you
14 know, being picked up. And the danger I saw, I'm
15 just really concerned that we are not using our
16 emergency management agencies to assist us when
17 these highways -- and I'm using I-83, but it could
18 be any number of our highways throughout our State,
19 that these local communities just can't handle it
20 and I think we need to activate our local volunteer
21 fire companies and fire police to really help manage
22 the traffic to make sure that our children who are
23 on the way to school or on the way home from school
24 are protected.

25 And that's a real concern I have because

1 when people get routed off of 83s and other major
2 highways like that, they're in a hurry. They've
3 already been delayed. And while we all want to say,
4 as we talked about safety earlier, people are just
5 in a hurry. And sometimes courtesy is not in their
6 thought process.

7 So I would like to see, somehow, PennDOT
8 with the State Police find a way to utilize our
9 emergency management agencies in each of our
10 counties to make sure that our local communities,
11 when major routes are closed, are using the best
12 emergency management techniques possible to protect
13 our children.

14 So I'll just leave it at that.

15 Madam Secretary, anything you can do in
16 the future to try and get that cooperation worked --

17 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Just a quick comment
18 on that. So the PennDOT Connects initiative will be
19 able to help that in the projects that are being
20 designed now. So we are only able to start with the
21 projects that are being designed.

22 I know a lot of I-83 work is already in
23 construction, and that's why you're having these
24 problems. So the good news is, those types of
25 issues and those types of connections with our

1 communities will be made earlier on and will be
2 starting in the design process.

3 So when they know where and when the
4 detour will be, we will be able to have those
5 conversations and we will do so. But we are always
6 looking, you know, to better partner with our local
7 emergency responders, particularly. Those are the
8 responders we work with in accidents, as well;
9 whether it's the municipality or the county 911
10 centers. So we're happy to reach out on those
11 specific issues to make sure that those
12 conversations are happening and see if we can assist
13 in any way.

14 Also, obviously, the safety, particularly
15 of the children, but of everybody in those
16 communities is very important to us, as well.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: I just think
18 that we can -- we have emergency management agencies
19 in each of our counties and our fire police are
20 always great volunteers and firefighters. And to
21 not utilize them to help direct traffic and get it
22 flowing and protecting our children is a concern.

23 Like I said, I mentioned York County, but
24 I'm sure it happens in other areas of the State --

25 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It's not the only

1 place. Right.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: -- with
3 interstates and stuff when they're shut down. And
4 in the case of I-83, it's shut down almost every
5 other day.

6 So anyway, the other thing I did have
7 some concerns about, we talked about the Turnpike.

8 Where are we moving on the Turnpike --
9 you know, I travel into Delaware and other States
10 and we see high speed, you can travel 65 miles an
11 hour through the tolls and it works very well.

12 Where are we at with that with the
13 Turnpike Commission as far as getting that moved
14 along?

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: And that's what
16 we're looking at in the pilot programs, as well,
17 where do high speed interchanges make more, you
18 know, on and off, make more sense, than the lower
19 speeds?

20 Obviously, we have a lot of toll takers,
21 as well. We still have people who want to pay,
22 and so we're looking at where that is.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Sure.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We are looking at
25 other States, and we want to learn from them, as

1 well. So right now we have active studies with
2 consultants taking a look that will help guide us to
3 that area, but we want to do anything we can,
4 especially with the tolls in the State that they are
5 right now, to increase ridership.

6 So if allowing more of those types of
7 access to get on and off, you know, increases
8 ridership, it's something we definitely want to take
9 a look at.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: And I think
11 that, you know, in the York region, with the
12 Turnpike, that's not a big deal. But I know I've
13 gotten off at Valley Forge already and the back-up
14 there is very dangerous. And I know in the
15 Pittsburgh area sometimes, around Monroeville and
16 that area, just -- I'm thinking of how do we speed
17 that up and improve the safety?

18 Those high speeds seem to work in
19 Delaware and some of the other States in keeping
20 cars moving to safety. So I appreciate that.

21 Thank you very much.

22 SECRETARY RICHARDS: That's one of the
23 States we're looking at. We want to see where
24 they've implemented it, where it works and where it
25 might be, you know, relatable to our situation here

1 in Pennsylvania.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Thank you.
3 Representative Heffley.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman.

6 I believe there were a few questions
7 asked about this earlier, but I just wanted to
8 follow up. The registration stickers, I know our
9 local police are very concerned about the loss of
10 that. They use that as a tool to identify folks
11 that were -- the cars weren't registered and it also
12 led to a lot of other follow-up citations and
13 arrests.

14 When the legislation was passed, it was
15 said that PennDOT was going to come up with a grant
16 program from the money that was being saved without
17 having to send those stickers out for local police
18 to apply for these license plate readers. They're
19 ranging anywhere from sixteen to eighteen. I've
20 heard some reports they were almost \$20,000 per
21 plate reader.

22 And if you have a small municipality that
23 has five vehicles, sometimes a lot of these
24 municipalities, they either don't have them at all
25 or they only have one or two vehicles that are

1 equipped with them. And I think there is some
2 language yet, but how can we work together to get
3 this grant program going so we can get this money
4 out to these local police departments, so they can
5 get these license plate readers?

6 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yeah, unfortunately,
7 when that conversation started, there was no
8 interest in going forward with that program. And so
9 we have saved money, but it's already been
10 programmed to projects. So in order for us to look
11 at that program now, it would mean taking money away
12 from projects that are already moving on the
13 pipeline.

14 We're happy to still discuss it. At that
15 time, we had been talking with -- I hope I don't get
16 the letter -- I think it's the PDDC or the PCCD.
17 I'm sorry. Because they are also interested in,
18 obviously, law enforcement and helping, you know,
19 making sure that the local law enforcement has the
20 tools that they need to do their job.

21 So maybe we could start with having a
22 discussion with them again, as well as sitting down
23 and seeing, you know, what law enforcement needs
24 are. But again, we had those conversations and
25 there wasn't interest. If there's interest now,

1 we're happy to sit down and take a look.

2 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: Well, I think
3 there were a lot of folks that were impacted by this
4 when this first came out. Myself, I did not support
5 getting rid of the stickers for that reason, for the
6 local police. But I know there were a lot of
7 conversations and people were looking forward to
8 this type of program to assist those local and the
9 State Police.

10 I mean, it cost the State Police -- they
11 have 1300 vehicles. So to equip each one of those
12 vehicles with a license plate reader -- and I know
13 they're already getting a lot of PennDOT money,
14 so --

15 SECRETARY RICHARDS: We did have -- I
16 thought it was a great tool, right.

17 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: Yeah.

18 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I was actually
19 shocked that more people weren't interested in it at
20 the time. We did have a firm come down and
21 demonstrate. We invited all the legislators to
22 come. I know many of you came to see it. It was a
23 very impressive tool.

24 And you know, again, it was unfortunate
25 at the time that there wasn't more interest in it.

1 And we did see -- I think we had that license plate
2 reader running for maybe 15 minutes and it had
3 already caught like 10 people right in front of the
4 Capitol that had some issues with registrations or
5 other issues that it picked up.

6 So I agree it's a valuable tool, and
7 we're happy to sit down and take a look at it and
8 see if there's anything that we can do.

9 REPRESENTATIVE HEFFLEY: Thank you.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
11 Donatucci.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you.

13 And I want to get on the list with Boyle
14 and Briggs because I would love to extend the Broad
15 Street Subway down to the Navy yard, just saying.

16 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Another big ticket
17 item. Yes.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Having said
19 that, Governor Wolf has committed \$300 million to
20 Philadelphia Port infrastructure, warehousing and
21 equipment. It will double container capacity,
22 create thousands of jobs. And thanks to the
23 persistent hard work of Chairman Bill Keller, the
24 Delaware River Channel has been deepened. I call it
25 the Keller Canal. That's what I have nicknamed it.

1 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I'm going to use it.

2 I have not used that, but I am --

3 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Isn't that
4 good?

5 SECRETARY RICHARDS: I agree, a good
6 title.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: So this is all
8 making the Port more attractive to shippers.

9 Can you comment on the Cargo Incentive
10 Program and the Philadelphia Regional Port
11 Authority?

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure. Sure.

13 First of all, we're really excited about
14 the nearly \$300 million investment that the Wolf
15 Administration had made into the ports, and we're
16 seeing the activity. Obviously, it coincided with
17 the deepening of the channel.

18 We had the largest ship ever come into
19 the port just a few weeks ago carrying a shipment
20 that it would not have been able to bring into the
21 Port. We're very excited about the new cranes that
22 are coming in to also help with the Port. That
23 should be in the next few weeks. They will also be
24 coming in and that might even top the last shipment
25 we just got as the largest ship to come into the

1 port.

2 And this is what that investment is
3 helping with. The Cargo Incentive Program is when
4 we pay firms per container that comes in to increase
5 their incentive to use the Port. Very pleased that
6 all of the firms that started using that incentive
7 program continue to grow their business over at the
8 Port. So it's a very positive, positive program.

9 We're looking in right now to how we
10 should continue it and how that is incentivizing the
11 Port so those decisions have not yet been made, but
12 I do believe, since I've been here last, either two
13 or three new firms are using the Port right now
14 through that incentivized program. So it has been
15 hugely successful, but with any program, we always,
16 you know, reevaluate it to see how it is.

17 I imagine we will continue it, but then
18 again, we'll take a look. We've been very pleased
19 with the outcome so far.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you.

21 It's great what's going on down there.

22 SECRETARY RICHARDS: It really is. It's
23 exciting down there. Very good.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Madam

25 Secretary, I want to thank you for taking your time

1 to answer all of the questions today.

2 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Sure.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: By the way, I
4 didn't mention earlier, I was a victim of a
5 distracted driver back in October when a distracted
6 driver on I-83 demolished my car. Fortunately, both
7 of us were fine, but like I said, I'm seeing more
8 and more of those kinds of things. So highway
9 safety is a real concern and I appreciate your time
10 here today.

11 And with that, any closing comment?

12 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Just happy to be
13 here.

14 The one topic I didn't get to speak
15 about -- I usually count on Representative Bullock
16 -- is diversity. So I just wanted to -- not that
17 anyone else is not interested in it, but that's
18 usually her go-to question.

19 But I just wanted to let you know it's
20 something we're working on. Not only am I the first
21 planner to leap in, but also the first female and I
22 take that responsibility, and really, that honor,
23 very seriously. We're going out. We're trying to
24 build women's programs in construction and
25 maintenance, making it easier for women and

1 minorities to find out about the work that we do, to
2 make it more attractive, to understand what's going
3 on.

4 We've had panels with female construction
5 firm owners going out, again, across the country.
6 I'm doing everything I can to make PennDOT an
7 exciting place to work, so we can really attract a
8 diverse workforce in addition to working with DGS
9 and doing a disparity study on how we give out
10 businesses. So I just wanted to put that in there.

11 I'm excited about that work, and I think
12 we are going to have a lot of good things to show
13 for it.

14 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Yeah, and I
15 want to thank you for that because I'm sure
16 Representative Bullock is listening, maybe upstairs
17 in her office or in Representative Markosek's
18 office. But I wanted to also say thank you because
19 we've been very blessed in my district area,
20 District 8, with Mike Keiser, who has been very
21 responsive to the needs of all of the counties.

22 So we're very blessed to have him, as
23 well, as part of our staff.

24 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Wonderful. I will
25 let him know.

1 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: A quick
2 follow-up. In District 11, we now have
3 Cheryl Moon-Sirianni --

4 SECRETARY RICHARDS: You do.

5 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: -- as our
6 District Engineer, a female.

7 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes.

8 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: She's doing
9 a good job, so --

10 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Yes, for the first
11 time, we have three very highly-qualified and
12 talented females leading districts, out of the 11.
13 And that's the highest number we've ever had.
14 They're doing a fantastic job.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Great.

16 Thank you very much. We will reconvene
17 at 2:00 for the Department of Conservation and
18 Natural Resources.

19 SECRETARY RICHARDS: Thank you.

20 (Whereupon, the hearing concluded.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

Tiffany L. Mast, Court Reporter
Notary Public