



HARRISBURG REGIONAL CHAMBER™

CAPITAL REGION ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Transportation Funding and Reform Commission Comments
September 18, 2006
Harrisburg, PA

Chair Biehler, members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to share the Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC's perspective on issues relating to our public transportation system and infrastructure. We applaud the Commission's outreach to the public as you are tasked with the challenge of reviewing Pennsylvania's transportation system and reviewing its complex funding formulas.

As you are aware, our Chamber submitted written comments to you in May of this year with recommendations for your consideration. It is encouraging to see similar issues contained in The Commission's recent preliminary report, in particular the highlights made as your guiding principles. After reviewing the preliminary report, there are issues that we would like to call to the Commission's attention as additional items for consideration in this public comment period:

- Our public transportation system is in critical need of an adequate, dedicated, and predictable funding stream to provide service in rural, suburban, and urban areas in Pennsylvania
 - In rural areas, legislation should allow for paratransit and fixed-route services, these funding sources should be additional sources, not an expansion or replacement of existing funding sources, such as the Medical Assistance Transportation Program funds (MATP)
- Public transportation has the ability to support community development and local infrastructure through the flexibility of its services. As a result, funding for mass transit should be a priority
- Additional creative transportation options to public transportation should be encouraged and promoted. Examples in our Chamber's footprint include Commuter Services of South Central Pennsylvania and a regional light rail project, Corridor One. These services compliment and enhance commuters' ability and flexibility to reach their destinations and help mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution
- As the highways and bridges in the state are in need of maintenance and repair, we urge the Commission to keep in mind policies that Penn DOT will soon implement, for example the Interstate Maintenance program funds, and its influence on interstate projects in Pennsylvania
- Included in the preliminary report is reference to public-private partnerships and we believe that this should be explored in detail to find if this will benefit Pennsylvania's transportation infrastructure
- Continue the strong working relationship between Penn DOT and MPO's as partners in the transportation decision making process

- Finally, as the need for maintaining and building our highways and bridges continues to increase, there is a need for the public to be educated to understand the cost and process involved with maintaining and building infrastructure