



GREATER PITTSBURGH REGIONAL ADVOCACY COALITION OF CHAMBERS

A voice for regional business.

Monday, November 7, 2011

The Honorable Tom Corbett
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Corbett:

The Greater Pittsburgh Regional Advocacy Coalition of Chambers (RACC) is an alliance of local chambers of commerce throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. The purpose of the RACC is to come together and speak with one voice on issues that are important to the common interest of the region's business community.

At our most recent meeting on October 27, 2011 the coalition met to discuss issues of common concern. It was clear that one issue arose as an immediate priority for this fall for all of us – investment in Pennsylvania's transportation infrastructure.

The declining state of the Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure is a problem that the business community in Southwestern Pennsylvania believes should be dealt with immediately. We support the recommendations included in the Transportation Funding Advisory Commission's report, and we urge you to take action on the report recommendations this fall.

- Transportation funding creates jobs, with engineering and design jobs immediately, leading to both construction jobs and manufacturing jobs throughout the construction supply chain.
- At the end of a project, there is a transportation improvement that improves the economic competitiveness of the Commonwealth and leads to economic growth and more jobs.
- Robust transit networks, particularly in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, will help drive the metro regions that provide most of the Commonwealth's economic activity.

Our organizations believe that funding transportation investments through a series of user fees, as the Funding Advisory Commission recommends, is particularly well timed as the economy struggles to recover. The Commission recommendations provide a realistic and achievable framework at the appropriate scale – \$2.7 billion per year, with \$400 million for mass transit. Business groups from across the state support moving forward with the package of recommendations.

While the Commission's recommendations provide much needed infrastructure funding and provide a short-term fix, the recommendations are still short of the current \$3.5 billion per year of unmet needs, and in 2020, this unmet need will be nearly \$7.2 billion.

The business leaders of the Commonwealth recognize the transportation issues we have and the feedback we have received shows significant support for a solution. There will be an economic price to pay for inaction, as a dated transportation system makes Pennsylvania less competitive. We believe that our state government should focus not only on repairing and maintaining the existing infrastructure, but also on providing for “new capacity” projects that will further help economic development in the Commonwealth.

It is for those reasons that this issue is the number one shared public policy priority this fall for the Greater Pittsburgh Regional Advocacy Coalition of Chambers. On behalf of all of our large and small business members, we urge you to act now on the recommendations offered by the Transportation Funding Advisory Commission, and we are ready to assist in any way possible to help secure its passage by the legislature.

Thank you,

African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania
Allegheny Valley Chamber of Commerce
Beaver County Chamber of Commerce
Butler County Chamber of Commerce
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
Indiana County Chamber of Commerce
Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce
Mon Valley Progress Council
Monroeville Area Chamber of Commerce
Norwin Chamber of Commerce
Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
Somerset County Chamber of Commerce
South Hills Chamber of Commerce
THE CHAMBER of Commerce, Inc.
The Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Washington County Chamber of Commerce
Waynesburg Chamber of Commerce
Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce