

Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO)
Comments about State Transportation Funding Proposals
June 11, 2007

Leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike

1. The proposal to lease the PA Turnpike should be deferred until a comprehensive evaluation of options for operating the Turnpike and leveraging its assets is completed. The CCMPO recommends that the operating structure for the Turnpike be reorganized, with a high degree of consideration being given to assigning operation of the Turnpike to PennDOT instead of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission or a private entity. If a private entity can operate the Turnpike in a profitable manner, then a reorganization of the Turnpike's operating structure should allow the Commonwealth to enjoy the same level of efficiency, with the "profits" being reinvested into the transportation system. Regardless, should the Turnpike eventually be leased to a private entity, the term of the lease should be much shorter than the proposed 99-year lease period.

Tolling of Additional Roads

2. *If* tolling of additional interstate highways is considered, *all* interstate highways should be considered for tolling. Also, as noted above, the CCMPO recommends that the operating structure for the Pennsylvania Turnpike be reorganized, with a high degree of consideration being given to assigning operation of the Turnpike to PennDOT instead of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission or a private entity. The CCMPO also expressed concern about the potential diversion of traffic from toll interstate highways to non-toll routes.

Tax Proposals

3. The CCMPO endorses the policy position of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), which recommends that state funding be increased to ensure that municipal and county governments' share of liquid fuels funds be increased from the current estimate of 14.7% to the desired 20% share. The CCMPO supports an increase in the Oil Company Franchise Tax (OCFT) (gas tax) to ensure that the level of funding provided to municipal and county governments is equivalent to the desired 20% share of liquid fuels funds.
4. Any increase in the Oil Company Gross Profits tax as proposed by Governor Rendell should be used to finance highway and bridge needs on both the local and state transportation systems.

Transit Funding Programs

5. One transit funding formula should be developed for use in all areas of the Commonwealth. The formula should be based on system needs and performance, and favor the distribution of revenue to growing, locally-supported public transportation systems.
6. The public transportation funding system should be streamlined into a single-program system, unlike the current system of multiple programs.
7. All rural areas in the Commonwealth should be eligible to receive public transportation funding.
8. The CCMPO supports the policy statements of the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Board of Directors relative to public transportation funding. (*Please see attached correspondence from CATA*).