



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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CENTRE REGIONAL
PLANNING AGENCY

THE GOVERNOR

May 19, 2008

Mr. Daniel D. Klees
Chair, Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization
2643 Gateway Drive, Suite #4
State College, PA 16801

Dear Mr. Klees

Thank you for writing to share your concerns about the impacts of tolling Interstate 80.

As you may know, I favored leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike to generate the money needed to make necessary repairs to the roads and bridges that you and other drivers rely on. I wanted to avoid significant increases in a variety of taxes and tolls on previously free roads for Pennsylvania residents. Such taxes were proposed in the 2006 Transportation Funding Reform Commission's report, which identified a critical need for \$1.7 billion more annually to keep Pennsylvania's roads, bridges and public transportation systems in good operating condition. Increased funding is essential to the safety of Pennsylvania's residents and the state's continued economic growth.

Most starkly, Pennsylvania has nearly 6,000 bridges that are structurally deficient. We need to start now on cutting that backlog and keeping those bridges open and free of weight restrictions. I have said repeatedly that walking away from the transportation funding problem this year was not an option—a point brought home by the recent bridge collapse in Minneapolis.

Although the Turnpike leasing plan could have generated as much as \$1.6 billion a year for transportation, the Legislature made clear it did not favor that approach. Instead, the Legislature agreed on a plan that raises roughly \$950 million a year for transportation by converting Interstate 80 to a toll road, and increasing tolls on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Travel statistics indicate that roughly 60 percent of Interstate 80 drivers are from outside Pennsylvania, and some may not contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of our state roads and bridges. Thru truck traffic, especially, exacts heavy wear and tear on I-80. The Interstate 80 conversion plan calls for up to 10 toll barriers, perhaps less, along the entire 311-mile length of the interstate to keep the impact on local residents to a minimum.

However, I am willing to revisit the issue of tolling I-80. Towards that end, I have asked for bids on leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike and I will submit them to the legislature. If it gets approved, we can roll back the tolls.

Sincerely,

Edward G. Rendell
Governor