

## Acting PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards Confirmation Statement

Chairwoman Ward, Chairman Sabatina, members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today. I would be honored to continue serving as the Secretary of Transportation and in recent meetings, I have been thankful to share our accomplishments and vision with you for the years ahead.

Maintaining and expanding Pennsylvania's transportation system is vital to keeping its businesses connected to the global economy. For every billion we invest, 25,000-30,000 good paying jobs are created in industries like construction. Of PennDOT's highway and bridge investments, more than 73 percent currently goes to the private sector. An investment in PennDOT is an investment in businesses and improving our infrastructure.

Investing in our transportation network goes beyond maintaining what we have. I want to keep at the forefront the need to include modernizations that will prepare our infrastructure for the changes coming with connected and automated vehicles, along with advanced traffic management strategies.

We are making headway on the needs of maintaining and improving the network of roughly 40,000 miles of state-owned roads and roughly 25,000 state-owned bridges, 35 fixed route transit systems, 130 public use airports, 259 private use airports, 277 private-use heliports, three ports and the privately-owned network of more than 5,600 miles of freight railroad lines. Our fuel taxes and various transportation fees support construction and maintenance on another 78,000 miles of municipal and county roads, along with 6,400 local bridges.

PennDOT issued contracts for 1,162 bridge projects and 2,583 roadway and other improvement projects worth approximately \$9.92 billion since January 2015. In that same time, we improved more than 20,400 miles of roadway and improved 1,930 bridges.

In other areas of the business, I am extremely committed to continuing to become a more innovative and diverse workforce while expanding business-partner and community collaboration. We have conducted regional forums and established a program targeted at making it easier for diverse and small businesses to become our partners. And through our PennDOT Connects planning process, we have met with more than 750 municipalities to discuss more than 1,850 projects so far, ensuring that we have documented local considerations for future projects.

My vision is to continue enhancing customer services for our driver and vehicle operations. We followed through on our commitment to begin offering REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and photo ID cards available at the customer's option last month. In March, over 68,000 customers opted to get a REAL ID. We are also accepting payment cards at our 12 new and retrofitted REAL ID-compliant centers. Nearly all of our sites will accept payment cards by early June, and all counters will have them by September.

I am proud of what we have achieved and would be honored to continue working with you to build on our successes. Thank you for the opportunity to review our efforts and commitment to

using our resources wisely, effectively and timely to make this state a wonderful place to work and live.