



**Testimony of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania (ACEC/PA)
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Senate Transportation Committee

Roseline Bougher

Chairman Langerholc, Chairman Flynn, members of the committee and guests, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am Roseline Hernandez Bougher President of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania (ACEC/PA). Gary Graham from member firm McMahon Associates is with me today and will provide testimony as well. Gary is an expert in this field and will be happy to take questions.

ACEC/PA is a trade association representing over 11,000 consultants throughout the commonwealth consisting of engineers, land surveyors, scientists, technicians, and other professionals with varied disciplines, including civil, structural, environmental, mechanical, electrical, geotechnical, chemical, industrial and agricultural engineering services.

ACEC/PA is the *business* association of Pennsylvania's engineering industry.

Consulting engineers are involved in designing projects throughout the nation, from bridges and prisons to water purification plants and energy-efficient generation and distribution systems. These consultants are involved in a number of critical infrastructure designs such as highways and bridges, stormwater systems, ventilation and electrical systems, and wastewater treatment systems. They solve environmental and ecological problems such as delineating impacts to wetlands or protecting habitat for threatened and endangered species.

As a catalyst in the problem-solving process, consulting engineers lead teams of multi-disciplined professionals on complex projects. They serve as expert advisors to local, state, and federal government agencies, and to private businesses and industries.

Consulting engineers serve these public and private clients from preliminary design through final design and construction. While our member firms provide a wide range of professional engineering services, their focus is on civil engineering and the design of Pennsylvania's water and transportation infrastructure.

As the association representing the consulting industry, we value Quality Based Selection or The Brooks Act of 1972 which requires that the U.S. Federal Government and those projects with federal funding select engineering and architecture firms based upon their competency, qualifications, and experience rather than by price. We believe that every project should be designed based on qualifications and competency focused on safety and quality. We also believe in the need for a long-term sustainable funding solution as the gas tax becomes less relevant and we recognize that the P3 Major Bridge Initiative is one of the alternative funding mechanisms we need to consider.

While the Commonwealth's recently passed the annual budget for 2022-2023 which included the reduction of diversions from the Motor License Fund, we have not hit a pivotal point to keep important infrastructure projects moving using all available resources and options. If PennDOT needs to use their annual budget to fund the nine bridges that were part of the P3 Major Bridge Initiative, there would be funds left for other much needed projects. If we take funding from one project to pay for another we are not going to get ahead, innovate, and ensure safety, quality of life, and mobility.

Although PennDOT will have funds for projects with the legislator's reduction of Pennsylvania State Police diversions from the Motor License Fund, it is not enough to take care of Pennsylvania's transportation system. Therefore, we must innovate not only with financing but with the delivery of projects.

Almost a decade ago, Pennsylvania faced critical choices on how to solve our transportation needs. Our public transportation system was strained in both rural and urban communities alike, the condition of our bridges was deteriorating, passenger rail, air and seaports needed attention, and our highways needed more than rehabilitation and maintenance. The passage of Act 89 provided a much needed \$2.3 billion-dollar investment and created the dedicated Multimodal Fund. The jobs that this Act created were not only in the engineering sector but across other sectors as we continuously

partnered and collaborated with other industries to solve issues and challenges and build a better community by building a better infrastructure in Pennsylvania. This Act created 25,000-30,000 jobs in the Architecture, Engineering and Construction industry. As infrastructure and construction projects increased, it created economic growth across industries and sectors. It allowed for businesses and employee growth because people and goods could get to their destinations.

Fast forward 10 years and we find ourselves with an infrastructure system which continues to be in need of a long term funding strategy. In the meantime, our transportation systems are not getting built, fixed, or updated to ensure safety, quality of life, mobility and resources for Pennsylvanians and our visitors.

In closing, we have options on how to deliver and finance projects in Pennsylvania. We must work together to find the right solutions to our infrastructure needs. We have seen what can happen if we do nothing for our highways, roadways, and bridges. The lag time to construction when design activities or environmental surveys are not completed can be years and without maintenance or modernization the consequences can be devastating. We look forward to working with PennDOT, the industry and all of you to move our infrastructure needs along.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Gary Graham would like to provide his testimony then answer any questions you may have.

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