



Susquehanna Greenway Partnership Policy Paper PA Transportation Funding Bill

June 1, 2013

Background: The Commonwealth's transportation system includes nearly 40,000 miles of roads and 25,000 bridges owned by the Commonwealth, nearly 77,000 miles of roads and 12,000 bridges owned by counties and municipalities, 36 fixed-route public transportation agencies, 67 railroads, 133 public-use airports, the Ports of Erie, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and numerous bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has indicated that 9,000 miles of roads owned by the Commonwealth are in poor condition and that 4,400 bridges owned by the Commonwealth are rated structurally deficient. The State Transportation Advisory Committee has indicated that 2,189 bridges exceeding 20 feet in length owned by counties and municipalities are rated structurally deficient.

The current level of state transportation funding does not adequately meet the needs for transportation infrastructure safety, maintenance, and capacity improvements. The State Transportation Advisory Committee reported in 2010 that the Commonwealth's transportation system is underfunded by \$3,500,000,000 and projected that amount will grow to \$6,700,000,000 by 2020 without additional financial investment by the Commonwealth.

In August 2011, the Transportation Funding Advisory Commission (TFAC) appointed by Governor Tom Corbett issued its final report which proposed a \$2.5 billion funding package including new funding sources as well as increased efficiencies and cost savings.

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership joins with other members of the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition (KTFC) to support passage of a \$2.5 billion comprehensive funding bill this year.

Benefits to the Susquehanna Greenway: In general, passage of a PA transportation funding bill will positively impact Susquehanna Greenway communities by substantially increasing the levels of state funding for multi-modal transportation programs. Robust multi-modals systems help to promote tourism and recreational use of our region's extensive system of water and land trails, reduce congestion on roads and highways, and promote in-fill development that preserves green space and supports vibrant small towns. The following provisions of a bill echoing the TFAC Report recommendations will have the most potential for positive impacts on greenways:

Our SGP Priorities

\$30 million Multi-Modal Transportation Fund that includes:

- \$10 million for bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- scenic overlooks and easements
- stream and river access

Multi-Bridge Program

Increased Funding for Dirt & Gravel Road Maintenance

Stream & River Access Feasibility Study

- Multi-modal Transportation Fund- A new special fund is needed to award competitive grants through the Department's programs relating to aviation, rail freight, passenger rail, port and waterway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, road and bridge and other transportation modes. This is the first time in the history of Pennsylvania transportation funding legislation that a grant program for bicycle and pedestrian facilities is being proposed. Since 1991, the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program has been the primary source of funds for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Tell your legislator to maintain support at \$30 million for the multi-modal transportation fund and that projects eligible for funding through the multi-modal program should specifically include:

- \$10 million for Recreational Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
 - Scenic and Land Conservation Easements Along Transportation Corridors
 - Scenic Overlooks
 - Improvements to Stream and River Access as Part of Bridge and Road Projects
- Multi-Bridge Program- The purpose of this program is to save costs and time by allowing multiple highway bridges to be replaced or rehabilitated by the PennDOT as one project for design and construction purposes. State and local bridges in geographical proximity, of similar size or design, or meeting the purpose of the program are eligible. Although PennDOT and local municipalities have done some grouping of bridge improvement projects, this proposal would greatly expand the use of this concept and the amount of eligible funds.
 - Increased Funding for Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance- Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program has made effective use of its \$5 Million annual allocation since it began in 1997. This program has demonstrated significant water quality benefits on the Susquehanna River and its tributaries by reducing erosion and sedimentation. The Program, run by Conservation Districts in 64 counties, has funded over 2,200 road sites to date and currently has a backlog of 14,000 unfunded identified pollution sites. A funding increase of \$10 Million will mean that the Program will be able to address the 16,600 currently identified worksites in 28 years. A funding increase of \$15 Million will mean that the Program will be able to address the 16,600 currently identified worksites in 18 years.

Additional Provision that would benefit the Susquehanna Greenway and our Partners:

- Comprehensive Statewide Stream and River Access Study-This study would research and identify feasible access points for streams and rivers across the Commonwealth. It would build on the river access plan developed and being implemented by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership is a leading champion for the Susquehanna River Watershed, Pennsylvania's most important natural asset and the largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. We work to advance public and private efforts to connect people with our natural and cultural resources, and promote a sustainable and healthy environment.