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For Immediate Release

PA Business and Labor Leaders Say Failure to Act on Transportation Funding Will Cost Jobs and Damage Economy

Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce join groups delivering open letter to Governor and General Assembly demanding action to keep Pennsylvania competitive

Conference and Chamber CEO Yablonsky: “We can’t afford to wait any longer”

(HARRISBURG – September 24, 2013) – Today, business and labor leaders representing thousands of employers and workers from across Pennsylvania delivered an open letter to Governor Corbett and the General Assembly signed by more than 70 union groups and business associations calling on them to pass transportation and transit funding legislation in the fall session.

Representing the Pittsburgh region, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce joined business and labor leaders to speak out about the consequences of governmental inaction on transportation and transit funding: increased business costs, pending job losses, threatened transit service and potentially lost business investment.

“We can’t afford to wait any longer. We’re getting to the point where inaction is going to discourage businesses from expanding and locating in the Pittsburgh region. It’s not clear when we’re going to fix some major bridges in our region. Employers who are already here are wondering how their employees are going to get to work. The General Assembly is back in session. It’s time to fund transportation and transit and keep our region – and the whole state - competitive,” said Dennis Yablonsky, CEO, Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce.

The impact of inaction is already clear:

- 1,000 structurally deficient bridges across the state now have new weight restrictions from PennDOT limiting truck and heavy vehicle traffic and impacting traffic congestion, business activity and the costs of shipping and transportation.

- The Pittsburgh region lost out on a major manufacturing facility to a competing state in part because the preferred site was accessible only by an obsolete bridge and there was no plan to replace it. Pennsylvania leads the nation in structurally deficient bridges – more than 5,200 statewide.
- More than 7,000 jobs in highway construction, including suppliers, will be eliminated in Pennsylvania if the funding crisis is not addressed, according to the Associated General Contractors of America. Another 7,200 jobs will be lost in the broader economy in retail and related areas due to the lost construction and supplier jobs.
 - In the Pittsburgh region alone, the transportation funding cuts will mean the loss of 1,400 jobs between on-site construction workers and suppliers of construction equipment, materials and services. Another 1,400 jobs will be lost in the broader economy due to the construction and supplier job losses.
- Tens of thousands of workers in Center City Philadelphia and Downtown Pittsburgh in hospitality, retail, service, healthcare, finance and other jobs – rely on public transit to get to work every day. Nearly 70% of Center City Philadelphia workers and 50% of Downtown Pittsburgh workers will be affected by cuts in transit service, making it difficult for employers in our urban cores to do business.
- The state’s largest transit agency, SEPTA, is preparing to cut services and displace 89,000 riders daily if it does not receive additional funding.
- The average Pennsylvania motorist already burns through nearly \$100 every month due to the cost of gas wasted waiting in traffic and the need for additional repairs and maintenance due to traveling over crumbling roads, and time lost in congestion. An adequate funding package would only cost around \$13 per month.

In their open letter, business and labor leaders stated:

- We support a transportation funding plan that is *comprehensive* in addressing all modes, is *adequate* to address the problem and is *sustainable* for years to come.
- An appropriate transportation funding plan will lead to *jobs now* – engineers, construction laborers and equipment operators, suppliers, etc. – and create tangible assets that will lead *to new jobs and investment in the future*.
- Investing in transportation *is a core function of government* and the Commonwealth cannot avoid the challenge any longer.

The list of participants in today’s press event is available [here](#)

The text of the open letter is available [here](#)

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The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its Affiliates – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work in collaboration with public and private sector partners to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more at alleghenyconference.org.