

Remarks by Bryan Nicol

**Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation
and
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On behalf of the state departments of transportation that build, maintain and operate most of our nation's transportation system – I want to thank the leaders of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the introduction of a six-year, well-funded highway and transit reauthorization bill.

Without this action to move forward, it would have been almost impossible to achieve passage of a bill before the short-term extension expires February 29. Now there is hope that Congress and the Administration will:

- Give us the tools to improve our highway and transit system; and
- Create more than a million jobs nationwide.

Let me tell you some of the challenges our transportation system is facing over the next decade:

- Congestion is costing \$69.5 billion annually in our nation's 75 largest cities – counting 3.5 billion hours of delay and 5.7 billion gallons of excess fuel consumed.
- Highway crashes take 43,000 lives and cost the United States more than \$230 billion annually.

- An estimated 30 million more people will be using the nation's transportation systems by 2010.
- An aging population will use the system in new ways for recreation, health care, and education.
- Traffic is growing twice as fast as our population and freight traffic is growing even faster than that.

Both AASHTO and the U.S. Department of Transportation have documented the level of investment needed to meet these challenges. AASHTO's *Bottom Line* report estimates that:

- The annual capital cost to maintain our highway system at its current performance is \$92 billion.
- The annual capital cost to improve conditions is \$125 billion annually.

For transit:

- The annual cost to maintain the system is \$19 billion.
- The annual cost to improve is estimated at \$44 billion.

So we are heartened to see this Committee moving to address these significant and essential transportation investment needs.

Let me add, though, that money, while important, is not the only thing this bill must address. States have asked that Congress take steps to:

- Streamline the project delivery process in ways that apply common sense to environmental protection, and allow us to meet transportation demands;
- Increase funding and flexibility for highway safety programs, so that we can begin to reduce the annual death toll of 43,000 lives;
- Encourage research that will improve the materials we use, the way we plan, build and maintain; and the tools we have to optimize our transportation systems.

Certainly, money is needed to make all this happen. And we look forward to working with Chairman Young, Rep. Oberstar, and the committee to find ways to make that investment possible and to pass reauthorization legislation by next February. Thank you.