

Testimony before the  
New York State Assembly Committee on Transportation  
Department of Transportation Two-Year Capital Program  
December 3, 2015  
Albany, NY

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Chairman Gantt and members of the committee:

I want to thank you for holding this hearing and addressing this issue that is important to every New Yorker. Our economy and quality of life is directly related to the investments we make into our infrastructure and our need to plan for the future is immediate.

The committee is well aware of the condition and needs of New York State's infrastructure. Far too many of our roads, bridges and related transportation infrastructure is substandard. The most recent Report Card by the American Society of Civil Engineers gave New York a **D+**, a grade no parent wants for their child and what it says about their future.

The fact is that poor infrastructure adds to the cost of living, which in turn translates into lost productivity, more damage to vehicles, more injuries on our roads, less time with our families and a significant increase in our carbon footprint. Poor road and bridge conditions cost New York drivers at least \$1500 a year. Everyone can agree that something needs to be done. An annual investment of just 10% of that cost would put us on solid footing for the next decade and address virtually all of our transportation needs.

We are still recovering from the damages caused by storms Irene, Lee and Sandy; and they exposed vulnerabilities we either ignored or didn't know existed. And while the federal government provided some relief to address the damage and resiliency needs, New York still has great needs. While it appears Washington is finally ready to address a long-term highway bill, there still needs to be a cogent and well-funded state plan that acknowledges the contributions that may come from Washington, but also allows us to plan and lead our own transportation destiny.

The investment of financial settlement funds has been a good start on the road to transportation improvements but we still have a ways to go. As we noted previously, one time investments can help plug holes but a long term constant funding stream is necessary to address this problem long-term; and turn it from a problem into an asset. With more funds invested, more jobs are created and our infrastructure will attract and enhance jobs rather than chase them away.

FHWA has estimated that for every billion dollars spent on infrastructure, **28,000 jobs** are created. These jobs will benefit all people on the construction wage spectrum from lesser skilled workers to highly skilled ones. Transportation spending is also a significant benefit to minority and women owned businesses. More jobs will positively influence spin-off economies and related service and material suppliers throughout the state. This investment will also result in new tax bases that will pay an immediate dividend. While improving the economy, investment will provide necessary rehabilitation and improvements to our deteriorating infrastructure, the decline of which negatively impacts public health and impairs our ability to compete nationally and globally. Sound infrastructure will attract businesses to invest in the city, while crumbling roads and bridges will make investment less attractive and could lead to an exodus of businesses and the jobs they create.

The better roads, bridges and related improvements means people spend less time in traffic and more time with their families, at school functions, youth sports activities and the things people want to do- not sitting

on a road in traffic wasting fuel and being frustrated. This quality of life improvement can be measured in dollars and cents.

ACEC New York urges the committee and state leaders to commit to fully fund New York's transportation infrastructure needs by having a realistic capital plan with dedicated funding sources truly dedicated to transportation.

Government sources of funding are not the only solution, however. The traditional method of financing and developing transportation infrastructure projects was created to protect the public interest by providing substantial public sector oversight of public funds. However, by providing access to alternative financing sources like public-private partnerships (P3s), the state can facilitate the construction of projects that might otherwise have been delayed or not built at all. By infusing private capital, the State can offer vital transportation services without committing capital resources.

While P3s means different things to different people, the public and private sectors already work together to maximize the limited resources we have. Most, if not all, of the infrastructure related agencies in transportation, water, environment, buildings, education and others work with private sector design and construction companies to identify the best ways to deliver the development and services that we need. Cooperation is important and it helps us be more effective and efficient.

Utilizing alternative delivery methods like design build and P3s, in certain circumstances, may be a way to get more projects delivered or delivered more efficiently. ACEC New York supported the implementation of design build in New York State in late 2011 and supports the expansion capabilities of this tool. We recognize that design-build isn't the right solution for every project but it is useful, especially when timelines are shorter.

It has also been proven that the use of private design consultants is more effective than relying on in-house design capabilities. In a study performed by NYU, it was shown that private design consultants are 15-20% more cost effective and they have far greater flexibility. ACEC New York supports a well-paid professional design staff to perform limited design and manage the projects put forth by the public sector.

In these challenging times, we must not lose sight of the fact that New York State's infrastructure is a critical component of our ability to return to economic prosperity. To that end, ACEC New York is committed to working with our public counterparts to maximize the benefit of every taxpayer dollar spent on the state's transportation and infrastructure programs.

Jay Simson, CAE  
President  
ACEC New York

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Oral testimony/ suggested -

Chairman Gantt and members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee. We have provided written testimony with additional facts and figures and we don't need to spend time reading that. I would rather just put some faces on the people this problem affects or will affect in the years to come. We all know we have significant needs but what does this mean for the upstate driver?

For the person living on the wrong side of a posted bridge it means delays by fire and other emergency vehicles not permitted across the bridge. Those delays can be the difference between saving a house from a fire or saving a person's life. For students it means an extra 20-30 minutes each trip, each day, or more than an extra 100 hours on a school bus each year- 1200 hours by the time they graduate from high school. 1200 hours that could be spent studying during the early years of education and possibly working part-time during high school.

These delays and detours have a real cost that we often don't see through everyday life. The cost of that 5 mile detour to the next bridge could add up to \$200 a year in extra gasoline costs.

With regards to the use of private professional design consultants,

Funding.....