



KEITH R. McCALL
MAJORITY WHIP

May 21, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

Frank Gillen, President
Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters
814 North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102-3212

Dear Mr. Gillen:

First and foremost, I am not in support of leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Moreover, we, the House Democratic Caucus, are not in support of leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

That being said please know that the official request for interest in leasing the Turnpike only asked for qualifications and expertise. Governor Rendell had two very specific questions: 1.) could the turnpike generate enough revenue to meet funding needs, and 2.) could Pennsylvania get a deal with terms that it would find acceptable (i.e. toll increases and worker protections).

PennDOT Secretary Al Biehler has been tasked to explore this option. PennDOT received nearly 50 responses from private firms revealing that the private sector could offer a value for the right to lease the Turnpike, with estimates averaging between \$10 and \$12 billion. It is surmised that Pennsylvania could invest this sum to provide an annual income stream to meet funding for roads and bridges of \$965 million per year.

HOWEVER, it is important to note that these private firms gave NO answer to the second question; that is, could such a transaction be structured to guard against toll increases, ensure acceptable maintenance and repair standards, and provide worker protections? That non-response is quite revealing and really buttresses my position, which is in opposition to leasing the turnpike.

Furthermore, leasing of the turnpike is subject to approval by the General Assembly. With that in mind, I am a co-sponsor of House Bill 555, legislation that would provide a broad range of alternatives to our Commonwealth's transportation funding crisis. At this writing, HB555 is in the House Transportation Committee where it was referred on March 19, 2007. I assure you that in the upcoming weeks I will be carefully watching what transpires during budget negotiations. There has been no final decision as the matter is still in the talking stages. I will reiterate however that, due to the aforementioned circumstances, I do not support, nor does the House Democratic Caucus, the leasing of the Turnpike.

Thank you for contacting my office. I hope that this letter answered your questions and eased your concerns. Nevertheless, please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you need anything further regarding this or any state-related matter.

Sincerely,

KEITH R. McCALL
State Representative
122nd Legislative District

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