



**Testimony of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania (ACEC/PA)
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House Transportation Committee**

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Chairman Hennessey, Chairman Carroll, members of the committee and guests, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Leeann Sherman, Executive Director of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania (ACEC/PA).

ACEC/PA is a trade association representing over 11,000 consultants throughout the commonwealth consisting of engineers, land surveyors, scientists, technicians, and other professionals with varied disciplines, including civil, structural, environmental, mechanical, electrical, geotechnical, chemical, industrial and agricultural engineering services. ACEC/PA is the *business* association of Pennsylvania's engineering industry.

Consulting engineers are involved in designing projects throughout the nation, from bridges and prisons to water purification plants and energy-efficient generation and distribution systems. These consultants are involved in critical infrastructure designs such as highways and bridges, stormwater systems, ventilation and electrical systems, and wastewater treatment systems. They solve environmental and ecological problems such as delineating impacts to wetlands or protecting habitat for threatened and endangered species.

As a catalyst in the problem-solving process, consulting engineers lead teams of multi-disciplined professionals on complex projects. They serve as expert advisors to local, state, and federal government agencies, and to private businesses and industries. Consulting engineers serve these public and private clients from preliminary design through final design and construction. While our member firms provide a wide range of professional engineering services, their focus is on civil engineering and the design of Pennsylvania's water and transportation infrastructure.

As we discuss HB 2747 today, two points I would like to address are Quality Based Selection

or the Brooks Act of 1972 and the work of the TQI or Transportation Quality Initiative group.

As the association representing the consulting industry, we value Quality Based Selection as defined by The Brooks Act of 1972 which requires that the U.S. Federal Government and any entity whose projects include federal funding select engineering and architecture firms based upon their competency, qualifications, and experience rather than by price or low bid. We believe that quality based selections should be the cornerstone for every project to help keep design focused on safety and quality. Innovative project delivery methods, collaboration between client, design and construction and a focus on safety and quality are key to successful projects.

One of the ways the industry has collaborated and continues to, is through the TQI Group consisting of industry associations of ACEC/PA and APC with our clients, the PA Turnpike Commission and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. TQI was created over four years ago to discuss challenges, vet options, examine solutions and work through myriad challenges facing the industry. We have addressed shop drawings, design process, construction process and evaluations, infiltration basins, regulated fill, procurement processes, supply chain and many other topics. Ad-hoc subcommittees were convened to tackle to discuss challenges, vet options and determine solutions then dissolved but throughout the entire four plus years the Procurement Process Team has continued to work together. TQI is where various project delivery methods have been examined. We have heard directly from other state transportation agencies, firms, and experts, and extensive discussions have taken place. The four organizations have worked diligently over the years and had very open and honest conversations driving innovation, quality, collaboration, financial implications and learning all we could from each other and those who presented to the group. Project delivery has been a substantial focus of this group with each organization's approach and focus slightly different but also having commonalities. The group recognizes there are many project delivery options and the right one needs to be chosen for each project without being too prescriptive to limit innovation or sacrifice quality and safety. The TQI group is currently moving forward with discussions about design build best value and a manual is being created by PennDOT at the industry's request. This manual will set the template for this project delivery method. We meet regularly and through TQI we are able to continue the forward progression to benefit taxpayers and the traveling public with the best options for project delivery. TQI serves an extremely important purpose

and ACEC/PA is excited to actively participate in this collaboration with APC, PennDOT and the PA Turnpike.

Almost a decade ago, Pennsylvania faced critical choices on how to solve our transportation needs. Our public transportation system was strained in both rural and urban communities alike, the condition of our bridges was deteriorating, passenger rail, air and seaports needed attention, and our highways needed more than rehabilitation and maintenance. The passage of Act 89 provided a much needed \$2.3 billion-dollar investment and created the dedicated Multimodal Fund. The jobs that this Act created were not only in the engineering sector but across other sectors as we continuously partnered and collaborated with other industries to solve issues and challenges and build a better community by building a better infrastructure in Pennsylvania. This Act created 25,000-30,000 jobs in the Architecture, Engineering and Construction industry. As infrastructure and construction projects increased, it created economic growth across industries and sectors. It allowed for businesses and employee growth because people and goods could get to their destinations.

Fast forward 10 years and we find ourselves with an infrastructure system which continues to be in need of a long-term funding strategy. In the meantime, our transportation system must continue to be built, maintained, or updated to ensure safety, quality of life, and mobility options for Pennsylvanians and our visitors.

In closing, we have options on how to deliver and finance projects in Pennsylvania. We must work together to find the right solutions to our infrastructure needs. We have seen what can happen if we do nothing for our highways, roadways, and bridges. The lag time to construction when design activities or environmental surveys are not completed can be years and without maintenance or modernization the consequences can be devastating. We look forward to working with PennDOT, the industry and all of you to move our infrastructure needs along.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today and I welcome any questions.

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