



Testimony of
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Impacts of Pennsylvania's Participation in the Transportation and Climate
Initiative
Senate Transportation and Environmental Resources and Energy Committees
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Good morning, Chairmen, members of the committees, and staff. My name is Yassmin Gramian and I am Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on PennDOT's participation in the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI).

In the United States, as well as in the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast region of the country, carbon emissions from transportation are now the leading source of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution, surpassing both power generation and industrial activity. In Pennsylvania, while the industrial and electricity production sectors remain the leading sources of GHG emissions, the transportation sector is close behind.

Unless we address transportation as a principal source of GHG emissions, it is likely that the commonwealth will not be able to meet the climate goals set forth by

Governor Wolf of a 26 percent GHG reduction by 2025, or an 80 percent reduction by 2050.

The growing frequency and severity of storms due to a warming climate are directly affecting our transportation system. The damage from washouts and landslides to Pennsylvania roads and bridges has caused PennDOT to triple and quadruple our emergency repair expenditures in recent years, especially in southwestern PA. Rising seas present a long-term threat to Philadelphia International Airport, PhilaPort, and other vital facilities in Southeast PA.

Moreover, there is growing danger to public safety – a danger that is particularly acute in our rural counties, where a bridge posting, or road closing can result in travelers having to detour miles out of their way to reach their destination or to access vital goods and services like groceries or health care.

The Transportation and Climate Initiative, TCI, is currently a collaboration of 12 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia, which PennDOT and our colleagues at DEP have been working on together over the past year. Staff from both PennDOT and DEP are involved and represented on all TCI committees and workgroups to develop a regional market-based program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and invest in clean transportation alternatives.

While the Administration has not decided if, or when, the commonwealth should join TCI, we recognize it as an important multi-state regional undertaking to reduce transportation's GHG footprint. Depending of the structure of the program, we would support investments in clean transportation options that would lessen dependency on traditional gas-fueled vehicles and would help to overall reduce congestion. That said, the administration does not support raising the gas tax. We will not make any decisions until the program is fully designed, modeling results are complete, and we get input from interested communities, businesses and other stakeholders. It is important that any plan is in the overall best interests of all Pennsylvanians.

The size and the economic power of the Mid-Atlantic-Northeast region – by far the largest in the country in terms of population and regional GDP – gives us the opportunity to have a major impact on climate policy.

DEP and PennDOT have worked together with the other TCI jurisdictions to actively drive the agenda and shape the program design. Our input and advocacy were instrumental in keeping natural gas outside the cap (as proposed). Additionally, we were the leading voice among the states to ensure that rural equity considerations be given full attention.

There are several recent and future key dates to consider. The TCI team released a draft framework for the Regional Policy Proposal for public input on October 1, 2019. The draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) and modeling of policy scenarios was

released to the public in December 2019 with public comment due by February 28, 2020. Participating jurisdictions will be asked to consider signing the final MOU in the spring of 2020 and the release of the draft model rule by the end of 2020.

Our ongoing participation has been and will remain beneficial for the commonwealth. PennDOT and DEP continue to actively engage stakeholders in discussions to understand the diverse populations and to consider the needs of all communities throughout this process. TCI is only one possible approach to address the transportation's relationship to climate change.

We are also paying close attention to the public debate that has begun to emerge in various TCI states, and we expect both to learn a great deal about the dynamics of public opinion around climate issues and solutions, as well as foster even more robust engagement of Pennsylvanians in that wider discussion. Ultimately, it is up to the public to set the direction, and up to us as policymakers to plot the path.

PennDOT views TCI as an important opportunity. Automated driving technologies, electric vehicles, shared mobility models and connected vehicle-infrastructure networks are changing transportation in sweeping ways. The conversation on how to best foster innovations like these while supporting our existing transportation system is ongoing and will continue to evolve. We have been gratified to work with our fellow Mid-Atlantic-Northeast jurisdictions across boundary lines and party lines to shape the Transportation and Climate Initiative. By remaining focused on our common

goal, I am confident we will make genuine and significant progress to solve our climate crisis, whatever approach the commonwealth chooses to follow.

It is critical that we remain willing to examine how to best support sustainable transportation in an ever-changing world, and PennDOT looks forward to proactively continuing conversations on investing in a safe, clean and robust modern transportation system.