

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
BUSINESS MEETING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
FEBRUARY 16, 2022



*Please note that these minutes are not intended to capture every individual comment but rather to identify critical discussion points and highlights of the STC business meetings.*

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Yassmin Gramian, P.E., convened the quarterly business meeting of the State Transportation Commission (STC) at 10:02 a.m. on February 16, 2022.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present on the Phone:**

1. Honorable Yassmin Gramian, Chair
2. Honorable Michael Carroll, Ms. Meredith Biggica, Alternate Present
3. Honorable Ronald J. Drnevich
4. Honorable Sharon Knoll
5. Honorable Frank E. Paczewski
6. Honorable James D. Kingsborough
7. Honorable Paige Willan
8. Honorable Tim Hennessey
9. Honorable Marty Flynn, Mr. Caleb Sisak, Alternate Present

**Commissioners Not Present**

1. Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Jr.
2. Honorable Chad Amond

**MINUTES:**

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Drnevich and seconded by Mr. Frank Paczewski, and unanimously approved, the December 15, 2021, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS:**

Secretary Gramian welcomed Commissioners and guests to the STC meeting. Secretary Gramian welcomed reappointed and new STC members:

- Honorable Marty Flynn, Senate of Pennsylvania Minority Chair of Senate Transportation Committee (Alternate: Caleb Sisak).
- Honorable Sharon Knoll, was reappointed to the State Transportation Commission.

Secretary Gramian also gave an update about:

- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)) would provide about \$4 billion in additional funding for highways and bridges in Pennsylvania for the next five years. The Law includes funds for Alternative Fuel Corridors and community charging stations for Electric Vehicles. Secretary Gramian added that BIL funds would be reflected in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and require the State to provide about \$1 billion in project matching funds.
- The Governor's 2022-2023 budget proposal caps the State Police funding from the Motor License Fund (MLF) at \$500 million. The capping would create an extra \$141.4 million available for transportation in the MLF.
- The Forbes Avenue over Fern Hollow Bridge collapsed on January 28. Secretary Gramian explained that the 447-foot-long bridge, built in the early 1970s, has had a 26-ton posted weight limit since 2014, was in poor condition, and owned by the City of Pittsburgh. She noted that the National Transportation Safety Board is investigating and PennDOT will hold any findings until they complete their investigation; Also, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has taken over the design and build of the new bridge and will work with all parties involved to complete the project.

**2021 12-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: By Larry Shifflet**

Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet presented the 2021 12-Year Transportation Program (TYP) adjustments stating that between November 20, 2021, and January 28, 2022, there were 605 program adjustments, including:

- 205 Project/Phase Additions
- 359 Project/Phase Changes
- 41 Project/Phase Removals (temporary or permanent)

Mr. Shifflet said that the overall changes represent a **\$104,430,943** increase for the reporting period.

Mr. Shifflet highlighted three transit projects added to the 12-Year Program in the Johnstown Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), totaling \$20 million. The additions are being funded with the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program.

Mr. Hennessey asked if there was a 20% funding match requirement for the projects?

Ms. Louwerse answered yes. The RAISE grant does have a match requirement; however, the Commonwealth did not pursue the match, the Local entities did. They demonstrated the funding match with an Amtrak Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements project at the train station and concluded that no additional state dollars were required as matching funds to proceed with the project.

Mr. Hennessey asked if the improvement projects are being funded by the MPO or are they using state-funded improvements to offset the match cost?

Ms. Louwerse said that the ADA improvements are being fully funded with Amtrak dollars from their federal program.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Tim Hennessey and seconded by Mr. Jimmy Kingsborough, and unanimously approved, the 2021 12-Year Program Adjustments were approved.

**BUREAU OF AVIATION 2022 FOUR YEAR PLAN: By Jennie Louwerse**

Deputy Secretary for Multimodal, Ms. Jennie Louwerse, AICP, presented the 2022 Four-Year Aviation Plan for State Fiscal Years 2022-2023 through 2025-2026.

The 2022 Four-Year Plan includes 48 projects totaling \$41 million.

Ms. Louwerse noted a decrease in funding and the number of projects compared to the previous years. She explained planned future reductions in Aviation Restricted Account funding due to reduced air travel resulting from COVID-19. For SFY 2022-23 and 2023-24, there is a \$1.5 million reduction per year. For SFY 2024-25 and SFY 2025-26, there is a \$2 million reduction per year.

Ms. Louwerse said that due to the reductions and anticipated additional state match to federal grants, 16 previously planned projects totaling \$4.2 million were removed from the program due to reduced funding availability.

Mr. Kingsborough asked if there were any discussions to raise jet fuel tax?

Ms. Louwerse said that was part of the Transportation Revenue Options Commission (TROC) report's recommendations. She added that there is a willingness to accept a jet fuel tax increase in the aviation industry if the revenues go to the Aviation Restricted Account.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Tim Hennessey and seconded by Mr. Frank Paczewski, and unanimously approved, the 2022 Four Year Aviation Plan was approved.

**PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:**

**Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, noted that the TAC voted to approve two new study topics, including:

- PA Aviation Needs Assessment and Strategic Action Plan
- Automated Speed Enforcement

**Administration**

Acting Deputy Secretary Ms. Michelle Jennings gave an update for the Administration Deputate.

Ms. Jennings said that the Bureau of Innovation hosted an Innovation Awards Ceremony in December 2021. She noted that twenty-six permanent members of District 12's Safety, Quality,

and Innovation Council received the first-ever George W. McAuley, Jr., P.E. Innovation Award, recognizing their contributions to promoting and fostering innovation at PennDOT.

Ms. Jennings discussed the Mentor-Protégé Program, which is a collaboration with the Department, Transportation Industry Groups, and the Federal Highway Administration that resulted from the 2018 Disparity Study. The Study concluded that there were barriers for small businesses and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises preventing them from competing in the prime consulting and construction market with the Department.

Ms. Jennings also said that PennDOT is working with the Department of General Services (DGS) to evaluate how telework may impact parking and facility needs going forward.

### **Driver and Vehicle Services**

Mr. Kurt Myers, Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS), gave an update about the Driver and Vehicle Services Deputate.

Mr. Myers discussed the Removal of Weight Class Stickers. Mr. Myers explained that Trucks with a registered weight of 5,001 pounds or greater were required to display a registration class sticker on their inside windshield.

Mr. Myers noted that the weight class stickers had become an antiquated and unreliable indicator for law enforcement and inconvenient for the industry/vehicle owners. He added that the final regulatory package was submitted to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and reviewed at their meeting on December 9, 2021. The deletion of the regulations was approved, published as final, and effective in the January 29, 2022, Pennsylvania Bulletin.

Mr. Myers discussed the Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Online System. He said that PennDOT had implemented self-service profiles in the CMV registration system on December 5, 2021, which allows a registrant the ability to manage their vehicle fleet and pay invoices online with a payment card.

Mr. Myers also discussed the Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) program, which took effect on February 7, 2022. The ELDT requires any individual who would like to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or upgrade their existing CDL to meet minimum training requirements. He added that the ELDT regulations are not retroactive.

Mr. Hennessey asked if PA is participating in the initiative to lower the minimum age limit to obtain a CDL?

Mr. Myers said this is a separate pilot program by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration that allows persons of ages 18 to 20 to Operate Commercial Motor Vehicles. The pilot will be working with the individual companies interested in participating. He added that states are not participating in the pilot program.

### **Highway and Bridge Program**

Acting Deputy Secretary Mr. Michael Keiser, P.E., gave an update about the Highway Administration Deputate.

Mr. Keiser discussed safety numbers, noting that the five-year trend has been good, but there has been a spike in fatality numbers for the last two years.

Mr. Keiser said that winter maintenance expenditures stand at 62-63% of the winter service budget. He added that both Rock Salt and Asphalt-Crude Oil prices are still high.

Mr. Kaiser explained that the 2021 letting program had been increased to \$2 billion due to funding provided by the General Assembly and the Wolf Administration, and the 2022 letting program increased to \$2.5 billion due to funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Mr. Keiser said that the Department is working with all the Engineering Districts to add new projects to the Engineering and Construction Management System (ECMS).

Mr. Keiser concluded his update noting that workforce and supply chain issues continue to be a drag on the Department's operations.

### **Multimodal Transportation**

Report Stands.

### **Office of Planning**

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet, gave a brief update about his Deputate.

Mr. Shifflet said that the implementation of BIL is underway. He noted that estimated funding totals had been incorporated into the draft 2023 12-Year Program, and work is underway to add projects and funding to the 2021 12-Year Program.

Mr. Shifflet noted that while funds have been made available for most programs for the Federal Fiscal Year 2022, guidance and additional information are still pending for newer fund categories.

Mr. Shifflet discussed the Municipal Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, which is set to be distributed on March 1, 2022. Mr. Shifflet noted that the funds will be allocated based on the 2020 Census data. As a result, municipalities will see an increase or a decrease in the payment they receive.

Mr. Kingsborough asked if the new electric charging stations are funded by the BIL?

Mr. Shifflet answered that most of the newer charging stations are privately owned.

Secretary Gramian commented that there are 13 new discretionary fund categories in the BIL, and all the Deputies are working on guidance for how they will be administered. She added that the STC would be briefed once the Department receives updated information.

Mr. Shifflet said that the Department issued a Request for Proposal for grant writing. He added that the Department intends to apply for all available discretionary programs.

### **WORKING SESSION:**

#### **AMPED 2021: HOW STATE GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING MORE ELECTRIC VEHICLE USE IN PENNSYLVANIA: By Colton Brown and Natasha Fackler**

Mr. Colton Brown from the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Ms. Natasha Fackler from the PennDOT Policy Office discussed the Commonwealth's efforts to promote Electric Vehicles (EV).

Mr. Brown discussed some benefits of EVs. He said that EVs cause much fewer lifecycle emissions than gasoline vehicles, even after accounting for emissions during the production of the vehicle. Mr. Brown added that an electric vehicle in Pennsylvania emits about two-thirds less air pollution than a comparable gasoline vehicle.

Mr. Brown talked about different types of EVs and charging plugs. He explained the two main types of EV, including:

- Plug-In Hybrid
  - Larger battery than regular hybrid
  - Plugs in for electric mode
  - Long range
- Electric
  - Largest batteries
  - No gas engine
  - No tailpipe
  - High torque

Mr. Brown noted that all electric vehicles could use a regular outlet for level 1 charging, and all electric vehicles can use level 2 J1772 plugs. He added that only Tesla requires an adapter.

Ms. Fackler discussed how to find EV charging stations. She noted that in addition to popular websites and apps, most electric vehicles have navigation options to help drivers find charging stations.

Ms. Fackler highlighted some of PennDOT's initiatives to promote EVs, including:

*The Mobility Plan:*

- Launched in May 2021, the statewide Electric Vehicle Mobility Plan builds on the information and strategies presented in the DEP 2019 Vehicle Roadmap and 2021 Roadmap Update.
- The plan will identify critical opportunities to expand the EV charging infrastructure, specifically related to commuter, destination, and emergency travel needs. The plan is anticipated to be completed this winter.

*PennDOT Internal EV Working Group:*

- In pursuit of the Mobility Plan and preparation for potential new federal funding for electrification, PennDOT has created an internal, cross-departmental team to answer questions, identify priorities, and complete action items relating to three focus areas: Outreach and Education, PennDOT's EV Fleet, and EV Deployments.
- PennDOT regularly communicates and collaborates with other state agencies and stakeholders to ensure Pennsylvania's EV rollout efficiency.

*Alternate Fuel Corridor Deployment Plan:*

- PennDOT led a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funded "pilot" study to develop the I-78, I-80, and I-81 corridors for electric vehicles and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fuels.
- In June 2021, Pennsylvania completed an alternative fuels corridor deployment plan for the installation of both electric vehicles charging and CNG fueling infrastructure along the I-81/I-78 corridors from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border to the Pennsylvania/New Jersey border.
- The study identified gaps along the corridors and prioritized locations to ensure those gaps would be addressed.

*Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)*

- New sources of funding for EV infrastructure
- Formula Funding - \$171.5 million to PA over a 5-year period
- Discretionary Grant Program - \$2.5 billion across all states
- Working on planning documents
- Prioritizing "pending" alternative fuel corridors
- Information sharing with our planning partners
- Educating local municipalities on new funding

Mr. Brown discussed DEP's support for EV, including:

- Consumer EV rebate
- Charging equipment incentives for businesses, non-profits, and local government
- Grant program for alternative fuel fleet vehicles
- Drive Electric PA Coalition
- EV corridor funding

- Electricity rate design study for electric vehicle charging
- Stakeholder and public education

Mr. Brown concluded the presentation by noting that EV sales continue to grow quickly and most organizations that forecast future vehicle sales anticipate that at least 25% of vehicle sales in the US will be electric vehicles by 2030, even without any new government programs or requirements. He added that PennDOT and DEP are working to facilitate this rapid change and prepare Pennsylvanians and our infrastructure.

Mr. Hennessey asked about finding charging stations?

Mr. Brown said that there are applications that allow users to find charging stations close to their location. He added that EV's navigation maps also show charging stations along the itinerary of the driver.

Ms. Willan commented about equity consideration when planning investments in electric vehicle charging stations.

Ms. Fackler said that the Department would work to ensure equitable availability of charging stations. She added that ongoing conversations with Temple University to create alternative uses for shared spaces as part of that effort.

Mr. Kingsborough asked if charging stations would be free?

Mr. Brown said that most businesses offer free charging to attract customers. Some other places have low costs for level two chargers. He added that overall, the cost would depend on who owns the charging station.

Chair Yassmin Gramian, P.E., asked Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet, to give a brief update on the Major Bridge Public-Private Partnership Initiative.

Mr. Shifflet noted that internal teams are still working on two proposals to choose the best value by February 23.

Mr. Shifflet said that the Department has conducted an extensive outreach campaign to gather input about the proposed bridge candidates for tolling and will address the concerns raised during the outreach.

**COMMISSIONERS REPORT:**

None

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

None

**NEXT MEETING:**



The next STC quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 18, 2022.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Frank Paczewski and seconded by Mr. Ronald Drnevich, the STC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.