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## Pennsylvania Signs 50-year Lease for I-80

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*Pocono Record, PA - Oct 16, 2007*

**HARRISBURG** - The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Turnpike Commission have signed a 50-year lease for I-80 and requested permission from the federal government to add tolls to the major artery, Gov. Edward Rendell announced Tuesday. Under the accord, the Turnpike must transfer \$83.3 billion to PennDOT for transportation projects throughout the state.

"The commission has said it will generate an additional \$33 billion over the next 50 years for I-80 improvements, bringing the total investment to \$116 billion," said Gov. Rendell, a Democrat. Rendell compromised on the lease proposal after his own privatization proposal was rejected by the legislature.

The tolls collected by the Turnpike on Pennsylvania's stretch of I-80 will be used only to pay for roads and bridges. The governor said the state's 73 public transit agencies will be funded by other revenues and income from the Turnpike, "including toll and bond issues."

## New Chief Appointed for WSDOT

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*Wash. Governor's Office Press Release - October 15, 2007*

**OLYMPIA** - Gov. Christine Gregoire announced the appointment of Paula J. Hammond as Secretary for the Washington Department of Transportation on Monday following an extensive nationwide search. Secretary Hammond has been serving as Interim Secretary since August.

"From her first day as Interim Secretary until now, Paula Hammond has risen to every challenge - from review of our state's bridges after the Minnesota bridge collapse to difficult decisions

involving our state's ferry system," said Gov. Gregoire. "We consulted with the top transportation and public officials in this state and around the country and found that the best candidate for the job was right here in Washington. Paula is a true leader with the vision to tackle Washington's transportation challenges."

Hammond will head nearly 7,000 employees in her new position. She has served WSDOT for 28 years, including the department's capital delivery, policy and operations programs. Prior to becoming Interim Secretary, Hammond was WSDOT's Chief of Staff since April 2001.



*Congratulations to Paula on this appointment. She will lead WSDOT through a period of historic investment in transportation. TW*

## Bill Would Charge States for Tolling Interstates

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*Land Line Magazine, MO - Oct 15, 2007*

*Iowa* - States planning to toll interstate highways may be heading for a speed bump if legislation by a U.S. representative from Iowa is approved. The Toll Road Prohibition Act of 2007, filed Oct. 10 by Rep. Leonard Boswell, D-IA, would force states which choose to toll interstates to repay the Highway Trust Fund for costs related to building and maintaining interstates.

Rep. Boswell's bill states that "... no toll may be collected for the use of a highway, bridge or tunnel constructed ... in whole or in part using federal funds unless the total amount of such federal funds, including reasonable interest thereon, is repaid to the United States from non-Federal sources."

Boswell's bill - HR3802 - has been forwarded to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Among the co-sponsors of the legislation is Rep. John Peterson, R-PA, who has fought toll proposals in several states, most recently on I-80 in Pennsylvania.



*The federal share of investment in transportation continues to decline in nearly every state, dropping as low as 25% or 30% in some states. The states, in response to Congress' failure to provide more funding, have resorted to alternatives to address a need that isn't going away. Whether you support tolls or not, there is irony in the fact that those who have chosen not to act, are now standing in the way of those who are willing to do so. We are destined to experience a new wave of federalism as this debate moves forward. TW*

## Mayor Advises Transit Strike to get Funding

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*WBBM780, IL - Oct 15, 2007*

*CHICAGO* - A west suburban mayor in the Chicago-area believes local transit employees strike in order to let the state leaders know they must take action with the long-debated transit-funding issues. Elmhurst Mayor Thomas Marcucci, a Pace board member, believes if CTA, Metra and Pace went on strike, Gov. Rod Blagojevich and legislative leaders would be forced to come to an agreement and appreciate how much the region is influenced by transit. He says it would make them realize the need for additional transit funding.

"Everyone in the region is affected by public transportation, whether you ever ride a bus or not," said Marcucci. "Everyone is affected. The buses take thousands and thousands of vehicles off the road every day. So does heavy rail, Metra, every day."

Marcucci argues with the notion that he's heard time and time again - that service cuts and fare hikes would only affect a small percentage of Chicago-area residents. "The public transportation system here underpins our region and all the activity that we all do each day to earn a living, to take care of our families, to go to recreation, to go to the doctor," he said.

Pace officials reported last week that time has pretty much run out for avoiding the first round of contingency fare hikes and service cuts threatened for Nov. 4. Marcucci says it may take all seven expressways being jammed for the governor and legislators to come to an agreement on transit funding.

## CA Agency to Establish Water-Based Emergency Transit System

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*San Diego Union Tribune, United States - Oct 15, 2007*

*ALAMEDA, Calif.* - A new agency has been created in the Bay Area responsible for strengthening ferry service to take over in case an earthquake or other disaster renders local bridges and highways unusable. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger visited the Alameda waterfront Monday to mark the establishment of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority. The agency, created by a bill signed by the governor Friday, will receive \$250 million from last November's state infrastructure bonds to begin work on constructing more boats and terminals.

The agency will consolidate existing ferry systems funded by the state, bringing the Alameda/Oakland Ferry, the Harbor Bay Ferry and the Vallejo Baylink Ferry under its control. The new agency will not have jurisdiction over the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District ferry.

"This is going to be great for the Bay Area," Schwarzenegger said. "The Bay Area will be better prepared for an emergency and also the people of the Bay Area will be much safer." Prompted from the Hurricane Katrina disaster, the governor said details for the improved ferry system still need to be worked out. In response to Vallejo officials' concerns that the changes may disrupt their service, Schwarzenegger said the agency will be a cooperative effort. "No one has been left behind here," he said.

## Plan would Measure Projects' Impact on Global Warming

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*Seattle Times - October 16, 2007*

*Washington* - Seattle builders may one day be required to measure the impact of large projects on climate change under proposed legislation by a city councilmember. Under Peter Steinbrueck's legislation, and a similar executive order already in place in King County, builders would not have to alter their plans. King County Executive Ron Sims put the plan in place to be the first step toward restricting projects' effect on the environment. The policy is aimed all public and private projects that require a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review.

"This leads the way to mitigating the environmental pollution that is contributing to global warming caused by projects," said Steinbrueck, who is not running in the Nov. 6 re-election. He said if his legislation is approved, any proposal to reconstruct the Alaskan Way Viaduct would be required to determine how many single-occupant trips it would add. Steinbrueck is opposed to an elevated replacement. "If we're going to make investments in transportation, they should reduce, not increase, the carbon footprint," he said.

The proposal will be discussed on Nov. 28 at the City Council's land-use committee meeting. If it receives full council approval, it will be up to the Department of Planning and Development to define how to measure construction's impact on global warming.



*The challenge here is to isolate the direct impacts a project would have on carbon emissions as opposed to other indirect influences. Anyone who has done serious research knows you have to isolate the "confounding" factors to ensure the accuracy of your thesis. The Alaskan Way Viaduct may have a carbon value assigned to it. At the same time, a "no-build" carbon value would have to be calculated as well. In the end, there may not be a net decrease in carbon emissions but rather a need to find other ways to mitigate it through carbon credits. This might be achieved through better land use planning, better transit service or more sustainable infrastructure of all types. This is not simple math. If elected officials are going to start analyzing carbon footprints then the rigor of that science needs to go beyond transportation facilities and look at all aspects of our lives. The transportation industry needs to be a lot smarter on this issue. TW*

## MnDOT Sued Over I-35W Contract

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Minnesota Public Radio, MN - Oct 16, 2007

ST. PAUL - Minnesota's department of transportation is being sued by two residents over its selection of Flatiron Constructors to replace the Interstate 35W bridge. Scott Saver and Wendell Phillippi filed the lawsuit in Ramsey County District Court Tuesday, in an attempt to stop MnDOT from moving forward on the project and voiding the contract with Flatiron.

The suit argues that the contract is illegal and harms taxpayers. Flatiron submitted the most expensive bid and tied for the latest project completion date, but the company beat out three other bidders in the technical score, accounting for factors including quality and aesthetics.

The plaintiff's attorney, Dean Thomson, also represented losing bidders C.S. McCrossan Construction and a joint venture of Lunda Construction and Ames Construction in their unsuccessful protest of the bid selection. The lawsuit requests a response from MnDOT by Nov. 5. Thomson said he hopes to have construction halted by the court while the case proceeds.

## New I-5 Bridge Could Cost \$4.2 Billion

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Portland Business Journal - October 16, 2007

Washington, Oregon - New cost estimates report a bridge crossing the Columbia River could reach \$4.2 billion, according to a release Monday by the Columbia River Crossing project team, a joint effort between the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

The group is looking at five alternatives to relieve possibly the worst bottleneck on I-5, including supplementing the existing structure and replacing the bridge. Assuming construction begins between 2010 and 2017, cost estimates for the various options range from \$3.1 billion to \$4.2 billion.

The group is planning open houses to gather public input on the possible alternatives. Next month, additional findings will be released along with funding options.

## NY Lawmakers Oppose M.T.A. Fare Hike

**NEW YORK** - A large group of lawmakers and transit advocates are demanding that the Metropolitan Transit Authority put off a proposal to increase rates on city buses, subways and tollways for next year. The legislators joined transit advocates at a news conference to compel the M.T.A. to remove the fare hike proposal from their December agenda.

Four state senators wrote a letter to the M.T.A. Wednesday urging the authority to wait until April 15, 2008 at the earliest to raise rates. They say if the authority puts off the hike until April, it would give the Legislature and Gov. Eliot Spitzer "a chance to provide additional funds needed in order to avoid a fare increase," according to the letter. "There are many strong reasons for increasing government aid to the M.T.A. There has been no permanent new state operating aid to M.T.A. New York City Transit in at least a dozen years," the letter said.

The M.T.A. is considering two ways to increase fares; both would increase subway and bus fares from \$2 to \$2.25, but one would introduce a new pay-per-ride MetroCard that would lower fares if commuters ride during off-peak hours. Toll hikes are also scheduled for city tunnels and bridges.

"Fare increases are a last resort," said Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky, a Westchester Democrat. "After 12 years of neglect under the Pataki administration, we want to work with the M.T.A., the city and state governments to change the failed policies of the past."



*No one likes fare or toll hikes. My experience with transit properties is that they only propose hikes when they have run out of other options. They are never done haphazardly or on a whim. That said, there is a policy dynamic at work here. With increasing operating costs, the revenues needed to preserve the present system can really only come from one of two places: users of the system or taxpayers (some of whom are users of the system). It is even more complicated when considering what is happening in Washington with the carbon footprint discussion as noted above. TW*

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## **Peters: Let Cross Border Demonstration Proceed**

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U.S. Department of Transportation News - October 17, 2007

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters met this week with Mexican Transportation Secretary Luis Tellez and U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez to call on Congress to re-evaluate its pending ban and allow the cross border trucking demonstration program between the two countries continue.

"With the change of just a few words, Congress can show that we can trade with the world, keep our highways safe, and our companies competitive at the same time," Secretary Peters said.

Congress is considering legislation that would halt funding for the U.S. Department of Transportation's cross-border trucking demonstration that allowed up to 100 U.S. and 100 Mexican trucking companies to operate beyond their respective country's borders. Secretary pointed out that Congress has spent \$500 million since 1994 in preparation for the demonstration, funding several hundred highly-trained inspectors, dozens of state of the art facilities and meticulous new requirements to ensure all trucks in the program meet U.S. safety standards without exception.

"We want to demonstrate to Congress that tough safety standards and rigorous inspections work and that trucks participating in this program will have the same features, the same upkeep, and the same commitment to safety that every U.S. truck has," said Secretary Peters.



*On November 9th I will be speaking at the Virginia DOT's Transportation Conference on the subject of the U.S. Role in Global Transportation. When you talk to the logistics community, they cite problems with the interfaces between modes (e.g. ship to rail) or other challenges to efficient transportation (e.g. permitting, border crossings) as some of the problems they experience. Both Mary and I have worked at the ADOT Port of Entry in Nogales, Arizona where trucks wait in line for hours and sometimes a full day trying to cross into the US. This problem must be fixed so that we remain competitive in a global economy. TW*

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