



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Governor's Press Office ♦ Room 308, Main Capitol Building ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17120
www.governor.state.pa.us ♦ 717-783-1116 (Phone) ♦ 717-772-8462 (Fax)

EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Jan. 19, 2007

CONTACT:
Chuck Ardo
717-579-6667 (cell)

**GOV. RENDELL JOINS GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER, MAYOR
BLOOMBERG TO CREATE NON-PARTISAN COALITION
FOR FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**
*ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION COMMITS TO FUNDING COALITION EFFORTS TO MAKE
INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING A NATIONAL PRIORITY*

HARRISBURG – Governor Edward G. Rendell today joined with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg to announce that they are creating a non-partisan coalition for federal infrastructure investment.

The *Building America's Future Coalition* will be comprised of state- and locally elected officials from around the nation and will become a repository of best practices on infrastructure funding issues. In the short-term, the coalition will work with the presidential candidates and the platform committees of the national political parties to ensure that the next president understands the enormity of the infrastructure crisis and is committed to increasing federal funding.

“We can all look at recent headlines about levees in New Orleans, air traffic congestion in the Northeast or the bridge collapse in Minnesota to realize that our nation’s infrastructure is in need of serious attention,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “But those examples only scratch the surface of the problem. The funding needs to maintain our existing infrastructure, and to improve and expand infrastructure as our nation continues to grow, just hasn’t been the priority it needs to be. Today, I’m joining with Governor Rendell and Governor Schwarzenegger to create a coalition that will focus attention on our national infrastructure shortcomings in a non-partisan way and will work to ensure the federal government makes this a top priority.”

“In the past 20 years, state and local governments have been forced to pay more and more of the cost for infrastructure repairs and expansion,” said Governor Rendell. “Three-quarters of our nation’s infrastructure spending is by state and local governments. In the past five years Pennsylvania has increased state funding for bridge repairs by 300 percent, yet the number of structurally deficient bridges has increased. Our country can’t do it without federal leadership.

“America’s infrastructure crisis is far broader than bridges and roads,” said Governor Rendell. “The infrastructure crisis includes the basic necessities communities and businesses need to survive: schools, waterlines, wastewater treatment systems, dams, flood mitigation, hospitals, energy, aviation, rail lines, and ports. This is an issue that crosses party lines and we need significant federal investments now to ensure the safety of our citizens and economic prosperity of our nation.”

In the past five years, Governor Rendell has guided Pennsylvania to make significant investments in a range of infrastructure areas, including doubling funding for state programs that fund improvements to freight rail lines and doubling the size of the state’s aviation funding program. He also drove the effort to deepen the Delaware River shipping channel.

The national infrastructure needs are more than \$1 trillion dollars.

“America needs \$1.6 trillion worth of infrastructure over the next five years, yet federal investment has been cut in half as a percent of gross domestic product since 1987,” said Governor Schwarzenegger. “This is disastrous because without adequate infrastructure to quickly and safely move goods and people our economy and our traffic will stop dead in its tracks. I could not be happier to join Governor Rendell and Mayor Bloomberg to shine an even brighter spotlight on this critical issue.”

The Rockefeller Foundation has committed significant funding for coalition staffing and resources.

“For almost a century, the Rockefeller Foundation has supported breakthrough solutions to society’s most pressing problems, and one of the most urgent challenges today is our aging and inadequate transportation infrastructure,” said Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation. “This coalition represents another mile-marker on the road to policies that protect the environment, keep citizens safe, and expand access and opportunity to underserved communities. We’re proud to play a role in this crucial endeavor, and we congratulate Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Rendell, and Governor Schwarzenegger for their leadership on this critical issue.”

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) graded America’s infrastructure as a “D” in 2005. The review should be a wake-up call to decision makers in the federal government. In each category ASCE found deteriorating conditions approaching dangerous levels of disrepair, with needs outpacing allocated funds. The ASCE estimated that the infrastructure funding shortfall was in the neighborhood of \$1.6 trillion over a five year period.

As the funding gap widens and the condition of our infrastructure further deteriorates, America’s infrastructure crisis becomes graver every day. The primary job of the coalition created today is to create an environment where infrastructure funding is treated like the national priority it should be.

In the short term, the coalition will work with the presidential candidates and the platform committees of the national political parties to ensure that the next president understands the enormity of the infrastructure crisis, is committed to increase federal funding, and that both party platforms reflect these commitments. In structure, the coalition will also resemble a think tank, performing analysis and offering opinions on emerging infrastructure issues, including federal, state and local legislative proposals.

The coalition will be made up of state and local elected officials from throughout the country. It will also work closely with associations that represent these officials, including the National Governors Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Association of County Officials, the National Conference of State Legislators, and the Council of State Governments.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, annual public spending on infrastructure, in inflation-adjusted dollars, has risen steadily from \$105 billion in 1956 to more than \$312 billion in 2004, an average of 2.3 percent per year. However, as a share of total non-defense federal expenditures, federal infrastructure spending has actually declined. Between 1956 and 1966, infrastructure spending as a share of total non-defense federal expenditures was approximately 10 percent. Since then, it has steadily declined, so that, for the last 20 years, federal spending on infrastructure has averaged 3.5 to 4 percent of total non-defense expenditures.

###

The Rendell administration is committed to creating a first-rate public education system, protecting our most vulnerable citizens and continuing economic investment to support our communities and businesses. To find out more about Governor Rendell's initiatives and to sign up for his weekly newsletter, visit www.governor.state.pa.us.