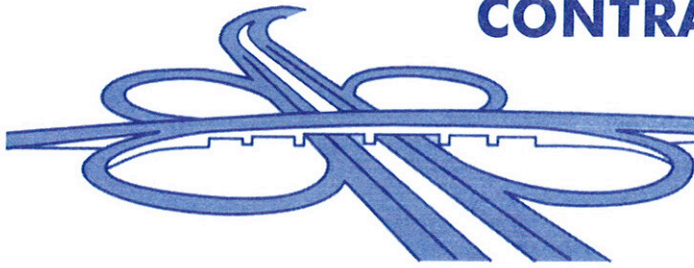


GEORGIA HIGHWAY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, INC.



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April 1, 2009

Representative Vance Smith
218 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Representative Smith:

There has been much debate of late regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of the DOT Board, the Legislature, and the Governor regarding the development and management of transportation programs in Georgia with your House Transportation Committee passing an amended version of Senate Bill 200 that seems to have reached a solid core for the continuation of this debate. With that thought in mind, we offer the following comments regarding some of the salient principles surrounding this issue for your consideration:

Consolidation of state agencies that may have redundant responsibilities should be considered when more efficiency and elimination of duplication could be realized. However, we believe that federal guidelines will continue to require a state transportation agency structured much as DOT is now, and that financial requirements, including tolls and PPI/Concessions will require some type authority to facilitate financing and completion of a comprehensive program. Thus in the final analysis, it is likely that there will be a need for both a transportation agency as well as an authority. The amended version of the bill accomplishes this, and as a result, would retain DOT as the responsible party to administer the construction contracts program.

The latest version of the bill also would give the DOT Commissioner full authority over the hiring, termination, and management of the other statutory officers as provided in the statute. We believe this to be a proper structure for the top management tier of DOT and would lead to greater efficiency among senior staff. Also, regarding the roles and responsibilities of the DOT Board and Staff, the bill would seem to lean toward making the Board more of a policy body much as a corporate board operates. This too seems to be a more efficient management structure.



Promoting The Best Interests of the Highway and Transportation System Industry



Establishment of a transparent, reliable process for developing a financially sound statewide transportation plan is absolutely essential given the great shortfall in funding for transportation programs in Georgia. Full integration of this plan with planning/programming functions, program management, and program delivery is essential as well, and should be considered carefully in any re-structuring effort of DOT. In crafting legislation to address such a plan and process, careful attention should be paid to insuring that existing program funds are not exposed to the possibility of unlimited diversion to PPI/Concession projects while at the same time being flexible enough to provide for an effective PPI/Concession project development process. The new language in this bill seems to accomplish this, but we should continue to be cognizant of possible unintended consequences as the process moves forward. Also, in keeping with the premise of a sound statewide plan, it makes perfect sense to support statutorily guaranteed revenues for local transportation needs being a part of the appropriation process.

With these comments in mind, we would encourage you to continue the effort to make the planning processes for transportation more efficient and to continue to pursue the hard work you have done in seeking a statewide funding solution. We applaud your Committee's recommendation of passage of the bill to the full House, and support it's passage by that chamber.

Sincerely,



Steven L. Parks
Executive Director
GHCA



David Moellering
Executive Director
GAPA