



## Rep. Dick Hess Named NEW Majority Chairman of House Transportation Committee

***Sen. Rafferty, Sen. Wozniak and Rep. McGeehan Remain In Their Roles***

As the 2013-14 session of the House of Representatives begins, longtime House Transportation Committee member Rep. Dick Hess (R-Bedford/Fulton/Huntingdon) has been named chairman of the committee by Speaker Sam Smith (R-Jefferson).

“I am honored to assume this position in the coming session, and I look forward to working hard to improve our transportation infrastructure in the Commonwealth,” said Hess. “We are faced with significant challenges in transportation, not only as a state, but as a nation. These must be faced in a continuing sluggish economic environment, which makes it that much tougher.”

Hess, beginning his 14th term in the House, has served as a member of the committee ever since he was first elected in 1986. He said his vast experience on that committee will serve him well as the session gets under way in January 2013. Hess will have a familiar face helping him craft transportation policy as House

Democrat Floor Leader Frank Dermody recently announced that Rep. Michael McGeehan (D-Philadelphia) will again serve as the minority chair of the committee.

“I intend to work closely with the administration, and with members of the House and Senate in both Republican and Democratic caucuses, to get an effective and fiscally responsible plan to tackle the issues we face with transportation in Pennsylvania. We must move forward, and we need to do this now, the time for delay is over. I am bringing an open-minded approach to all facets of our infrastructure. The only way we can be successful is to work together for the benefit of all of our residents. I embrace the challenge,” Hess said.



Hess assumes the chairmanship following his successful tenure as majority chairman of the House Commerce Committee, which has oversight of banking and economic issues in Pennsylvania.

On the other side of the building, the hardworking tandem of John Rafferty (R-Montgomery) and John Wozniak (D-Cambria) will continue to lead the Senate Transportation Committee as majority and minority chairman respectively.

Source: PA House of Representatives News Release

### KSRRA CALENDAR — IMPORTANT DATES

**April 15** KSRRA Spring Board Meeting following RFAC meeting - Harrisburg, PA

**April 16** PA Rail Day on the Hill - Harrisburg, PA

**May 21-23** 2013 PA Rail Freight Seminar - Harrisburg, PA

**July 16** KSRRA Meeting prior to RFAC meeting - Harrisburg, PA

## 2nd Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) Application Period Announced

PennDOT's Bureau of Rail Freight announced that a second application period for the RTAP grants will open Monday February 4th and will extend through noon February 15th.

Approximately \$18 million in funding is available in this second round of RTAP grants. Although a Capital Budget authorization is required to receive these grants, PennDOT will

allow applicants actively seeking such an authorization to make application. Remember to contact your local legislator to make sure your projects are included in any future authorization bill.

## Senator John Rafferty: Rail Needs To Be A Part of Transportation Funding

In the public discussion of Pennsylvania's transportation funding shortfall, the focus is generally on our roads and bridges and public transit systems. The importance of rail, however, cannot be underestimated.

In 2010, I had the opportunity to visit Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region and witnessed first-hand the need for sustainable freight rail created by this burgeoning industry. But the need for a vital, safe, and sustainable rail freight system is not limited just to the demands created by Marcellus Shale development. Rail is an important tool for economic development throughout the Commonwealth.

According to a 2010 report issued by the Blue Green Alliance and the Economic Policy Institute, freight rail supports over one million jobs throughout every sector of the economy nationwide. In fact, it

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has been reported that every direct job in rail supports 4.5 indirect jobs. The Commonwealth has an incredible opportunity before it. The General Assembly and the Governor, in our combined duty to address Pennsylvania's crumbling transportation infrastructure, can also work together to put people back to work.

The General Assembly has historically championed the rail freight industry, whether through the Rail Freight Assistance grant program or the Capital Budget Transportation Assistance Program. For example, Rail Freight Assistance received funding of \$5.75 million in the current fiscal year. Nonetheless, both of these programs are ultimately supported through the General Fund. The pressures on the General Fund, including stagnant revenue growth, have increasingly placed these programs in peril.

Bringing about a solution to the Commonwealth's transportation funding needs is my number one legislative priority in 2013. Although a broad spectrum of my colleagues in both the Senate and House share this priority, the continued advocacy of the



rail industry will be critical to realizing much needed rail funding.

As in the past, the dialogue is bound to focus primarily on the Commonwealth's highways and bridges and public transit systems. The rail community has my commitment to be an advocate, but I cannot stress enough the importance of your continued presence in the halls of the Capitol as a means to achieving our desired end.

Together, all of us in the world of transportation, regardless of which mode, have an historic opportunity. Now is the time for action.