

MIKE TURZAI  
Speaker of the House

Room 139 Main Capitol Building  
PO Box 202028  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028  
Phone: (717) 772-9943



House of Representatives  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg

125 Hillvue Lane  
First Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
Phone: (412) 369-2230

March 21, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
Room 225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

It has come to my attention that Pennsylvania is the only state in the country that does not recognize the critical nature of highway and infrastructure construction and maintenance during efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

I strongly urge you to direct PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission to rescind recent suspension of work orders given to highway contractors working for PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission.

In my area, the PA Turnpike has several active projects that need to move forward:

- Southern Beltway Section 55C1-1 Allegheny/Washington
- Southern Beltway Section 55C2-1 Washington
- Southern Beltway Section 55C2-2 Washington
- Southern Beltway Section 55C1-2 Washington
- Total Reconstruction Mile Post 28.49-30.88 Allegheny/Butler

Stopping these projects which are of an open-air nature makes no sense and greatly hurts the economic development of western Pennsylvania. PennDOT has several projects that are also idle when they could be progressing.

Every other state in the nation has enabled highway workers and inspection staff to work remotely or with additional safety precautions. I am aware that today the governor of New Jersey joined governors of California, Illinois and New York, in issuing shelter in place orders that include exemptions for construction personnel and public construction activities.

Halting highway construction will devastate the households of hundreds of western Pennsylvania families when they could be earning a paycheck and helping fuel the economy. Unless this stop work order is rescinded, thousands will needlessly go on unemployment – further exacerbating

the UC system in the commonwealth. Finally, the impact to PennDOT's capital program will be costly in the form of "delay claims" that PennDOT will be contractually obligated to pay idled construction companies. These claims could reach hundreds of millions of dollars.

Construction executives working with PennDOT and Turnpike officials can manage work while keeping virus disease control at the utmost forefront of the plan. These plans can include moving to an inspection scenario to reduce human interfacing and assist to achieve social distancing on construction sites. I urge you to direct transportation officials to immediately return to work while implementing virus control procedures.

Sincerely,



Mike Turzai  
Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
Member, 28th Legislative District

CC: The Honorable Yassmin Gramian, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
The Honorable Dennis Davin, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development  
The Honorable Bryan Cutler, Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
The Honorable Stan Saylor, Chairman, Majority Appropriations Committee, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
The Honorable Kerry Benninghoff, Majority Whip, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
The Honorable Marcy Toepel, Majority Caucus Chair, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
The Honorable Donna Oberlander, Majority Policy Chair, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
The Honorable Kurt Masser, Majority Caucus Administrator, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
The Honorable Mike Reese, Majority Caucus Secretary, Pennsylvania House of Representatives