



## KING COAL HIGHWAY I-73/74 AUTHORITY

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Thank you, Chairman Mica and ranking member Congressman Rahall for inviting me to speak today. It is my pleasure to join you today at this important hearing. To give you a little background on the King Coal Highway I-73/74 Authority, we cover both the King Coal and Tolsia Highways which will travel from Bluefield, WV to Huntington, WV when completed and cover five counties. These two highways are the West Virginia Corridors of I-73/74 which will travel from Sault Ste. Marie, to Myrtle Beach on the I-73 section and will travel to Chicago, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa on the I-74 section and intersect with these important highways I-95, I-64, I-77, I-75 just to name a few. I-73 /74 is the #5 High Priority Corridor in the U.S. This corridor contains over 61 million people along its route or 21% of the US population. The corridor as it runs through West Virginia will make it an important transportation hub and will help impact economic development, tourism, and safety. According to an Economic Impact Study that was completed by Chmura Economics and Analytics, the annual economic impact for the highway is \$220 million dollars that sustains 2,020 jobs. This report does not include employment from the proposed Trans Gas Plant in Mingo County, WV or the proposed Intermodal Park at Pritchard. These projects should increase this figure even more.

Currently we have 18 miles of highway that have been designed on the Tolsia Highway and 19 miles of combined King Coal and Tolsia Highway either constructed or under construction with the help of federal funding and public private partnerships with coal companies. We also have six more miles that are proposed to be built in a public private partnership with Consol Coal Company.

The federal funding we have received has mostly come from the 2005 SAFETEA-LU Transportation Bill as well as earmarks from Congressman Rahall and the late Senator Robert C. Byrd. The only way our highway can be finished is by the support of federal funding, especially funding from the new transportation bill which we fully support .

One of the main reasons we are building the King Coal and Tolsia Highways is because of the dangerous narrow two lane US Route 52 and to move our housing to higher ground away from flooding streams that run beside of Route 52, the The King

Coal and Tolsia Highways will be the replacement for US Route 52 and will be built mostly along higher ground. Since 2001 according to records from the National Climatic Data Center in McDowell and Wyoming counties, two of the counties that the highway will travel through have had a combined total of damages from flooding of \$237 million that could have been alleviated if these highways had been constructed on higher ground with new housing built out of the flood plain.

One suggestion for a possible source of funding for the new transportation bill funding could be a check off space for a dollar amount on an individual personal federal income tax form. I have been asked by numerous individuals if there was any way that they could give money toward our highway project. This could possibly be one way for individuals to assist with federal highway trust funding and future highway projects.

As I close, I would ask for quick passage of the next transportation bill which we hope will include funding for the King Coal and Tolsia Highway projects. And I hope all of you will someday be able to tour our project area to see the progress being made as well as the problems that exist on our current highways, Thank You