

**U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Improving and Reforming our Nation's Surface Transportation Programs  
Columbus, Ohio Field Hearing  
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**Testimony of  
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- Good morning. My name is Christiane W. Schmenk. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you. I am here in two capacities. The first is in my role as Mayor of the City of Marysville. The second is in my role as Director of External Affairs of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company.
- I have had the pleasure of serving as Mayor since January 2008. Marysville is located 30 miles to the northwest of downtown Columbus and is a city of 20,000 residents. It is located in Union County, which has been the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing county in Ohio since 1990. Union County has a population of 50,000, and it is predicted to grow to a population of 85,000 by 2030.
- For a small city, Marysville has a rich employment base. We are home to The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, the lawn and garden giant that has called Marysville home since 1868, is the maker of Scotts Turf Builder and Miracle-Gro garden fertilizer, and employs 1200 in Marysville and 6000 worldwide; Veyance Technologies, which manufactures industrial conveyer belts and employs 330; Nestle R & D which develops beverages, coffee and candy and employs 250; Parker Hannifin, which makes world-class hydraulic pumps and valves and employs 150, and Univenture, an environmentally-friendly plastics packaging company and its affiliate Algaeventure, which is developing technology to extract fuel from algae. We are also home to many small businesses. Just beyond Marysville's borders is Honda of America Manufacturing, Honda R & D Americas and its various plants and approximately 160 suppliers. Honda alone employs over 13,500 near Marysville and when suppliers are included, estimates put the total jobs related to Honda over 130,000.
- Marysville is easily reached from downtown Columbus by taking I-270 north and exiting west on US Rt. 33. U.S. 33 is the major thoroughfare for residents of the Columbus area to reach Marysville and vice versa, and every day, thousands of employees come through the I-270/US 33 Interchange on their way to work. Along the way to Marysville and parallel to Rt. 33 northwest is Industrial Parkway, a thriving business corridor that is home to over 170 businesses and 2000 employees, mainly in the light manufacturing, office, high-tech and service sectors. The US Rt. 33 Northwest Corridor also has over 2500 research and development jobs and is predicted to be an area of rapid business growth in the next decade.

- The major reason that all of these companies and jobs have grown up around Marysville is our good transportation system. Marysville has benefited from good freight rail access and is serviced by CSX. Our major employers rely on CSX to bring raw materials and haul finished goods.
- Marysville has also benefited from good highway access. Thirty years ago, our state invested close to \$75 million to extend and widen US Rt 33 for access to Honda's facilities. The payback has been tremendous. Honda has conservatively invested well over \$7.0 billion in Ohio since 1979. That figure does not count the millions of dollars in corporate, payroll and other taxes returned to our local economies.
- At the intersection of US 33 and I-270 is a prosperous neighbor of Marysville, the city of Dublin. Dublin is home to 40,000 residents and 66,500 employees. Close to 28,000 of these employees work within the immediate vicinity of the US 33 and I-270 interchange. Dublin is home to iconic businesses such as Cardinal Health, a Fortune 17 healthcare company that employs more than 30,000 people worldwide, Verizon, the Wendy's/Arby's Group and Jack Nicklaus' prestigious Memorial Golf Tournament. Recently, Dublin was recognized by Fox Business News as the best small city in the United States to start a business.
- When we think of infrastructure that is critical to jobs and our economy, the CSX Rail line to Scotts and Honda, as well as the Rt. 33 and I-270 interchange and the Rt. 33 Northwest corridor are top of mind in our region.
- Because I am a long-time employee of a successful Ohio company, Scotts Miracle-Gro, I would also like to say a few words about the importance of good transportation infrastructure from the private business perspective. Our business counts on this infrastructure every day to transport raw materials to us and to move goods and services into the marketplace. Honda, Scotts and other manufacturers have perfected their logistics systems, following a "just in time" delivery method to minimize carrying costs. This means that traffic delays result in lost time and money.
- U.S. Rt. 33 has been designated as a "macro corridor" by the Ohio Department of Transportation in recognition of its role in advancing Ohio's economy, and it is among the top 10 highways in Ohio that carry 80% of all truck traffic in Ohio.
- The US 33 and I-270 Interchange, built in the 1960s when Dublin had just 670 residents and Marysville had about 4500, is operating more than 50% above capacity and is considered to be "failing" by engineers. It is ranked in the top 20 locations in the state for freeway crashes.
- This interchange also facilitates the movement of over 25,000 trucks a day, and intermodal access to CSX freight rail routes directly serving Honda and other manufacturers. The smooth operation of this highway system is key to maintaining our local economy and the economy of the State of Ohio.
- The good news is that plans have been put in place to address the need. However, I personally am very concerned about the length of time it will take to fix these problems and our lack of available funds. A ten year plan was put in place, but even if success is achieved, the earliest construction can begin is 2015, and it won't be completed until at least 2017.
- As I come before you today, I ask for your help in addressing Ohio and our nation's critical infrastructure needs. Our state's economy has suffered tremendously in recent years, and we need to do everything we can to protect and preserve the good

employers that we have. In my town of Marysville and in the northwest part of Central Ohio, that includes improvements to the CSX rail system, US 33 and I-270 to loosen the chokehold of congestion and to provide for safe and adequate transportation for the thousands of employees and tons of freight that allow commerce to occur daily.

- As you consider issues to resolve when you craft our nation's transportation policy and the next federal reauthorization bill, in my role as Mayor and as a representative of area business leaders, I humbly ask you to consider the following:
  - First, I'm a firm believer that not all earmarks are bad. While some have not been deserved, many are necessary and justified. If they are awarded based on their relation to jobs, they can be a very good use of our tax dollars. One simple suggestion is that it would be helpful if all Congressional officials use the same appropriations request form. This would save our staff time and money and allow for an apples-to-apples comparison of requests.
  - Federal funding awards should be based not only on infrastructure needs, but more importantly on the nexus between jobs (including both retention and new job creation) and infrastructure improvements. Projects that create the most investment, retain the most jobs, or create the most jobs should score the highest. Projects that improve freight flow, helping our country to compete globally also need special recognition.
  - The streamlining and consolidation of regional districts for US Government and State agencies and departments should be pursued. US and state economic development regions, social service regions, and transportation regions should be in the same district.
  - Timing needs to be addressed. The average citizen traveling every day between Marysville and Columbus simply cannot understand why our dangerous corridor can't be fixed until 2017. To them, that is an example of government at its worst. I would suggest that firmer, shorter deadlines for project reviews must be established and enforced. Federal agency coordination needs to be regulated to shorten decision making. Thank you for your interest, Mr. Chairman, in expediting project delivery.
  - Partnerships are important. Marysville, Dublin, Union and Franklin counties, the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and the Ohio Department of Transportation have partnered on major transportation investments like the US 33 and I-270 interchange and Industrial Parkway, and will continue to do so. Policies that continue to promote this collaborative approach are encouraged and welcomed.
  - Stakeholders like Scott's Miracle Gro, Honda, Cardinal Health and other major employers in this area have united in their support for keeping freight and people moving through the I-270/US 33 interchange. This project is a perfect example of the pressures placed on the nation's 40- and 50-year old infrastructure in a world of just in time manufacturing.
  - We appreciate that there are limited funds in each fiscal year, and uncertainty in when the six-year federal transportation bill will be reauthorized. However, this inconsistent cash flow forces communities to start and stop transportation projects

- as they move through different phases of study and engineering. This lengthens project delivery time considerably. It would be helpful if project funding could be more stable and for multiple phases of work instead of being awarded in piece-meal fashion.
- Trends confirm that people are driving less because of the recession and buying less gasoline because of better fuel efficiency. While this is good for our environment, the decreased project funds available from gasoline taxes continue to erode our transportation buying power. More flexible federal funding programs and a more economic-based approach to identifying the highest return on investments would help us stretch these precious dollars further. Additional creative financing techniques should be considered, such as transportation tax credit bond programs similar to those used for renewable energy projects or energy conservation.
  - Of course, we would appreciate more funding, flowing more quickly, to our communities to address these major transportation needs that are so critical to our economic viability. While increased budgets may not be possible in these austere times, we appreciate your promoting policies that help us work more flexibly, faster, and with more certainty that funding will be available on a consistent basis.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to share our story with you.