

DRIVING AHEAD

VOLUME 3/ISSUE 2, 2007

A bi-monthly newsletter of the
American Highway Users Alliance

In This Issue

- 1 Federal Front**
Testifying Before the Commission
- 2 Federal Front**
Corporate Average Fuel Economy
Congressional Responses to
Road Leasing
FY 2008 Highway Funding
GAO and Flex Funding
- 3 Highway Users in Action**
Pennsylvania AAA Federation
Construction Industry on
Carbon Policies
Public-Private Partnerships
Bright Future of Great Highways
- 4 Roadway Safety
Foundation**
National Road Safety Awards
Deadline - June 1
Putting the Brakes on Fatalities
2007 NACE Annual Conference

The American Highway Users Alliance is the broadest-based transportation coalition in Washington, DC, focused exclusively on promoting highway system performance, roadway safety improvements and freedom of mobility.



1101 14th Street, NW
Suite 750
Washington, DC 20005
202.857.1200
www.highways.org

75th Anniversary
1932 - 2007

FEDERAL FRONT

Testifying Before the Transportation Policy Commission

*ABA President & CEO
Pete Pantuso*



President and CEO Greg Cohen testified before the Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission on March 19, focusing attention to the needs of motorists and businesses that want a strong and reformed federal highway program. Overall, Cohen emphasized three main national priorities that deserve the support of the federal government: (1) Interstate Commerce and Connectivity, (2) Mobility and Congestion Relief, and (3) Roadway Safety.

Cohen emphasized three main national priorities that deserve the support of the federal government: (1) Interstate Commerce and Connectivity, (2) Mobility and Congestion Relief, and (3) Roadway Safety



*ATA President & CEO
Governor Bill Graves*

Along with Highway Users President Greg Cohen, Executive Committee Members Peter Pantuso from the American Bus Association and Gov. Bill Graves from the American Trucking Associations testified before the Commission.

When Congress was considering SAFETEA-LU, The Highway Users was a strong proponent of the creation of a commission that would develop new national transportation priorities and reconsider the 20th Century structure of the federal surface transportation program. Cohen maintained that the program has gradually been turned into a local needs funding program, without a clear purpose, and replete with user fee diversions.

Compared to other ground-based modes, highway travel provides superior speeds, accessibility to destinations, and offers people unparalleled control over their lives. For passengers, the most common surface alternative to automobile travel is bus travel, which also relies on efficient highways.

User fees fund the highway mode, which is a key reason why it is the only transportation mode that consistently pays for itself and even subsidizes other modes. Cohen noted, in 2005, highway users subsidized transit at an astonishing rate of 12.5 cents per passenger mile (or \$5.7 billion total dollars).

He also stated the importance of promoting the need to maintain budgetary firewalls (or take the trust fund off-budget) in order to guarantee that all highway user fees are spent. Secondly, Highway Trust Funds should only be used for projects that provide a significant benefit to those highway users paying the fee. If highway user fees are diverted to non-highway projects, they should be justified based upon a reasonable standard of benefit to highway users.

To access the full testimony, log onto www.highways.org. ■

Photo Credits: National Surface Transportation Policy & Revenue Study Commission

• **Weighing in on Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE)**

Offering to work with the Senate Commerce Committee to draft a better CAFE bill, The Highway Users is opposing one measure, S.357, the Ten-In-Ten Fuel Economy Act, sponsored by Senators Feinstein (D-CA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME). On April 20, we sent a letter to Chairman Inouye (D-HI) and Ranking Member Stevens (R-AK), urging them not to approve S. 357, which is scheduled for Commerce Committee consideration in early May. The bill would step up

Transportation Appropriations Subcommittees. The letter requested full funding for highways, as required by SAFETEA-LU, including \$631 million in "RABA" funds that were not included in the President's Budget request. Once again, we called on the appropriators to fully fund the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as authorized, with vehicle-safety programs funded by the General Fund and highway safety programs funded from the Highway Trust Fund. The President's Budget recommends diverting \$122 million from the Highway Trust Fund to fund the NHTSA vehicle safety programs in FY 2008. The Highway Users drafted the letters, which were co-signed by many key transportation stakeholders. To access the letter, log onto www.highways.org/pdfs/March-2007-House-Approvs-Letter.pdf.

This month we plan to work closely with the Senate Commerce Committee to support well-crafted, thoughtful policies to address fuel economy needs, while balancing them with consumer desires for safety, convenience, vehicle choice and cost effectiveness.

• **Meeting with the GAO on Flex Funding**

On March 1, Highway Users President & CEO Greg Cohen was interviewed by the General Accountability Office (GAO) for their new study on the controversy surrounding the "flexing" of highway funds to transit and other non-highway purposes. Cohen expressed support for permitting states flexibility within the highway program to meet their diverse highway needs, but opposed the practice of flexing money out of the highway program for projects that do not serve the motoring public. With unfunded highway needs in every state, Cohen described the problems of flexibility as symptomatic of larger flaws within a federal highway program that lacks a defined purpose. ■

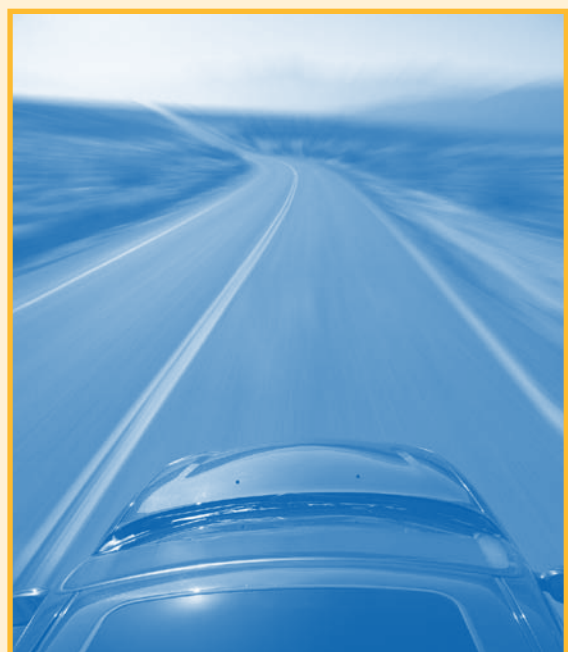
CAFE standards to 35 miles per gallon as a new, combined standard for cars and light trucks. The current standards are set at 27.5 mpg for passenger cars and 22.2 mpg for light trucks. We offered to work closely with the committee to support well-crafted, policies that address fuel efficiency issue, while balancing them with consumer desires for safety, convenience, vehicle choice and cost effectiveness. The Feinstein/Snowe bill had not been fully vetted with consumers, and will present unfair burdens and restrictions on individuals and families that intend to purchase new vehicles.

• **Hill Meetings to Discuss Congressional Responses to Toll Road Leasing**

In mid-April, we met with House Highways & Transit Subcommittee Democratic staff and Senate Environment & Public Works Republican staff to discuss toll road leasing. Congress may consider legislation to restrict such deals or require certain protections for road users, and staffers have asked for meetings to discuss concerns over potential toll increases, revenue diversion, and consumer protection.

• **Leading the Charge for FY 2008 Highway Funding**

The Highway Users staff were on Capitol Hill delivering letters on March 29th with our FY 2008 highway funding recommendations to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate



HIGHWAYS *IN ACTION*



- **Working With Pennsylvania AAA Federation**

On April 17, The Highway Users was invited by one of our key members, the Pennsylvania AAA Federation, to Harrisburg, to engage key Pennsylvania legislators, staff, think tanks, and researchers on a wide range of issues, including funding for highways and transit, environmental issues, and public-private partnerships. The Federation includes ten AAA Clubs, which extend far beyond Pennsylvania's borders. AAA attendees and The Highway Users reserved the greatest number of questions for speakers who discussed the potential lease of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Attendees registered some important concerns over the transparency of lease negotiations and how such plans would impact toll payers in the Commonwealth. Governor Rendell cannot move forward with a lease of the Turnpike until the State legislature passes enabling legislation.

- **Advising the Construction Industry on Carbon Policies**

The Highway Users was invited to be the guest of the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) in meetings on April 13 & 20. Members of the TCC have asked for our help in formulating constructive policies on climate change and carbon dioxide emission

- **Formulating Policy on Public-Private Partnerships**

The Highway Users Policy and Government Affairs (PGA) Committee, chaired by Taylor Bowlden of 3M, held a meeting on March 9 to develop principles regarding public-private partnerships (PPPs). The meeting included short presentations from consultants Alan Pisarski and Peter Loughlin, who provided differing perspectives on the issue. The committee then developed a brainstormed list of opportunities and threats from PPPs, as well as some draft principles. For a copy of the draft meeting minutes, please contact SteveWiener@highways.org.

- **Envisioning A Bright Future of Great Highways**

In March and April, Greg Cohen participated in separate highway and finance "visioning" working groups with other highway experts selected by AASHTO. The purpose of the exercise was to brainstorm a "blue sky" vision for the highways of the future. The working groups drafted visions that focused on freedom of movement, national competitiveness in a

global economy, and making our highways more pleasant to travel on. The finance working group supported the user pays / user benefits concept, that underpinned the creation of the Highway Trust Fund in 1956. Seven additional expert panels will make recommendations on other transportation topics. AASHTO will incorporate all nine drafts into a larger "transportation vision" study for the Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission. We will share the final report with our members when it is completed by AASHTO in late May. ■

Without our involvement in climate change policies, congressional action could have severe consequences to highway users by raising fuel prices, distorting highway planning and environmental analyses, and delaying construction.

reductions, in order to fully respond to the concerns of many in the 110th Congress while making the strongest possible case that congestion relief can be part of a solution to wasted fuel and unnecessary emissions. Without our involvement, congressional action could have severe consequences to highway users by increasing fuel prices, distorting highway planning and environmental analyses, and delaying construction. Cooperation between The Highway Users and construction interests on carbon dioxide regulation and legislation strategy will continue. Many members of The Highway Users are also involved in the TCC.



National Roadway Safety Awards Deadline is June 1st

The deadline to apply for the National Roadway Safety Awards is fast-approaching — June 1, 2007. The biennial awards program honors the most successful and innovative road safety projects from around the country. Winners receive recognition from the Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation at a ceremony held in Washington, DC. A compilation of best practices will include each safety award winners' project descriptions and will be distributed to various state and local decision-makers. Don't miss out on this important event! ■

Putting the Brakes on Fatalities

On behalf of the Roadway Safety Foundation (RSF), a 501(c)(3) charitable/educational organization chartered by The Highway Users, RSF Executive Director Greg Cohen attended a "Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day" planning meeting at the American Society of Civil Engineers offices in DC. RSF was a founding partner for this annual event, whose volunteer management has recently shifted from the National Society of Professional Engineers to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). We urged the planning committee to make use of hundreds of student ASCE chapters to raise the profile and effectiveness of the event.

"Put the Brakes On Fatalities Day" is a media-oriented program, modeled after the American Cancer Society's "Great American Smoke Out Day." Nationwide educational events are aimed at making October 10th a day with no traffic deaths. A typical day in America includes 119 deaths on American roads. ■



RSF staff Daisy Singh explained the Foundation's current projects to NACE Board Member and Allegany, MD County Engineer Kevin Beachy, P.E. Many visitors took copies of the Read Your Road publication to pass-along to new drivers in their family. Nearly one-third of all conference attendees visited the RSF booth.

attendees of whom many touted safety as the highest priority in their jurisdiction. RSF Executive Director and Highway Users President and CEO Greg Cohen addressed the NACE Board of Directors to request their involvement in RSF's federally-funded study on safety data quality. ■

Did You Know?

In 1939, the Bureau of Public Roads - a forerunner of today's Federal Highway Administration - suggested that Congress approve a plan for an interregional system of high-capacity highways.

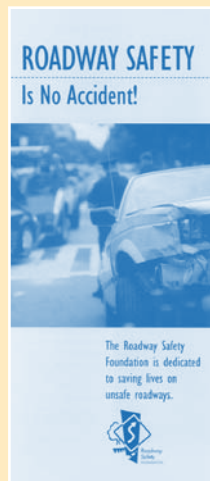
WHAT'S AHEAD

September 25, 2007 — Save the Date! 2007 Forum on Highway Issues & 75th Annual Meeting

In conjunction with the Highway Users 75th Annual Meeting & Luncheon, we will be releasing a commemorative Historical Milestones booklet detailing the organization's long history over the decades. If you or your organization has any relevant historical photos from the 1930s to the present that you would like to include in the document, please email them to daisysingh@highways.org or send them to American Highway Users Alliance, 1101 14th Street NW, Washington DC 20005. We will return the photos once the project is completed.

RSF Exhibits at the 2007 NACE Annual Conference

On April 22-23, RSF participated in the National Association of County Engineers 2007 Annual Meeting and Technical Conference held in Milwaukee, WI. The event drew hundreds of engineers, highway commissioners, construction managers, and safety advocates from many regions. RSF received much interest from conference



Included in this issue is a BTS Pocket Guide to Transportation 2007, and the newly re-designed RSF brochure "Roadway Safety is No Accident." Contact the Roadway Safety Foundation at 202.857.1200 if you wish to support its ongoing efforts.