



# *Blue Ribbon Commission on Highways*

Legislative and Public Outreach  
Committee Report  
September 4, 2013

# Our Mission

The purpose of the Legislative and Public Outreach Committee is to actively involve the public as a full and valued partner by accepting public comments in determining the adequate structure and financing of the present and future needs of the State's highway system.



# How We Obtained Public Input

- Utilized Rahall Transportation Institute as consultants and meeting facilitators
- Developed Public Outreach Website – [www.wvbrc.com](http://www.wvbrc.com)
- Held Nine Regional Meetings
  - Each regional meeting had the same format
    - Overview of the current highways system
    - Audience Response System (ARS) Survey
    - Public Comments
- Accepted input from Online Surveys and Mail-In Responses



# Public Hearing Locations

586 West Virginians Attended in Person



In addition to Public Hearings:

- 750 Surveyed Online
- 61 responses received via mail

In total, nearly 1400 West Virginians voiced their opinions.



# TV Coverage of Hearings

- Television media were at all hearings except Elkins.
- TV reports were uniformly positive and accurately represented our efforts.



# We Learned The Public Felt Strongly About...

- That West Virginia's roads and highways are important to them (99% agreed),
- That the roads and highways help create economic development and high paying jobs (95% agreed), and
- It is critical that the state fund safe and efficient roads and highways (95% agreed).



# What We Learned About Revenue Generation

The most favorable options for **revenue generators** were:

- Question 12) I would support a continuation of tolls on the West Virginia Turnpike to help pay for new projects.
- Question 10) I would support additional registration fees or increased vehicle taxes on alternative fuel vehicles.
- Question 7) I would support increases in motor vehicle license and registration fees.



# What We Learned About Innovations

The most favorable options for innovations were:

- Question 15) I would support further development of public-private partnerships to aid the construction and maintenance of highway projects.
- Question 14) I would support the development of a State Infrastructure Bank to provide loans to public and private entities to help finance highway projects.





# What We Learned About Cost Efficiency

The most favorable option for cost efficiency was:

- Question 6) I would support dedicating sales tax receipts on motor vehicle repairs, parts and services to the State Road Fund.



# What We Learned About Unfavorable Options

The most unfavorable options were:

- Question 8) I would support increases to gasoline and/or diesel motor fuel taxes.
- Question 11) I would support increases to the consumer sales tax with the proceeds going to the State Road Fund.
- Question 9) I would support increases to the vehicle tax (previously known as the privilege tax).
- Question 17) I would support allowing localities more flexibility to implement user fees or local sales taxes to help fund road projects.



# Summary

- Highways and bridges are important to West Virginians.
- “Doing nothing” is not acceptable.
- DOH has to be more efficient.
- West Virginians do not favor increased taxes.
- West Virginia must be more efficient and innovative, and may restructure fees to gain revenue.

