



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 5, 2008

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Shuster joins ARC, House Colleagues, to Discuss Economic Benefits of the Appalachian Development Highway System

Washington, D.C.—Today **Congressman Bill Shuster** joined representatives from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and his colleagues on the Congressional Appalachia Caucus in a press conference to discuss the economic benefit that will result from the completion of the Appalachian Development Highway System.

“The completion of the Appalachian Development Highway System will bring economic activity into the 9th district, create jobs and help reduce the cost and time of travel throughout the region,” Shuster, co-chair of the Congressional Appalachian Caucus said today.”

“We have already seen the impact that highway improvements have had on our area,” Shuster added. “REI has set up shop on I-99 along with Wal-Mart and Sheetz distribution centers. All of these businesses inject the local economy with jobs and opportunity. The success of I-99 underscores the need for us to complete Route 219 to link Bedford and Somerset Counties to its regional neighbors to keep this momentum going.”

During the press conference, the ARC presented a new study by Cambridge Systematics Economic Development Research Group and HDR Decision Economics that evaluates the economic benefits a completed Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) would yield for the Appalachian regional and national economy.

ARC Federal Co-Chair Anne B. Pope said that “just like the U.S. interstate highway system the ADHS is designed to be a complete system. And for it to be a true system, all of its corridors have to be connected, either to other corridors or to the interstate. So to realize its full potential, the ADHS must be completed. Of course, a number of the remaining miles have to be built in some of the most difficult terrain there is in Appalachia. But we can’t stop now after all the investments we have already made.”

The study found that by facilitating national freight flows, reducing travel times, improving safety, and enhancing access to markets, completion of the ADHS would create new jobs and greater value-added activity, returning \$3 in economic benefits to the nation for every \$1 spent to finish it.

Some of the key conclusions of the study include:

- **Regional Economic and Job Gains:** Completing the ADHS is projected by 2035 to create 80,500 jobs, \$3.2 billion wages and generate over \$5 billion in increased regional economic activity.
- **National Efficiency Savings:** Nationally, savings in travel time, and fuel and non - fuel operating costs, and increased safety are estimated to grow to \$5.1 billion annually by 2035.
- **Positive Benefits for Nation and Region:** Under all scenarios, including conservative cost and discounting assumptions, completion of the ADHS is expected to result in significant benefits in excess of cost from both national and ARC regional perspectives.
- **Enhanced Competitiveness:** ADHS completion will enhance the future economic competitiveness of the national and ARC regional economies by improving freight and commodity flows through additional capacity for the national transportation system.
- **Global Trade Network:** Completing the ADHS will provide the nation and the Region with important linkages in a long-distance network that serves a growing domestic and global trade environment.

The first highway system authorized by Congress for the purpose of stimulating economic development, the ADHS is a 3,090-mile highway system composed of 31 corridors located in the 13 Appalachian states. The system is approximately 85 percent finished, and its completion will fit into an integrated network connecting to national markets and trade flows. There are 434 miles in the ADHS that remain to be constructed. The new study is available at www.arc.gov.

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