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TACIR study highlights to growing infrastructure funding crisis
Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance urges returning lawmakers to take note

Nashville – In a letter to members of the Tennessee General Assembly and the state’s congressional delegation, the chairman of the Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance today urged Tennessee’s policy makers to take note of the current inadequacy of infrastructure funding in Tennessee. Citing a recent report from the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR), Pete DeLay asked Tennessee policy makers to take into consideration the “broad and critical implications” that inadequate funding for infrastructure has for Tennessee.

The TACIR report, “Building Tennessee’s Tomorrow: Anticipating the State’s Infrastructure Needs”, is the third in a series of statutorily mandated, biennial studies. Released in late October, the report highlights statewide infrastructure needs through 2008, and puts a price tag for addressing those needs at \$24.4 billion. This represents an increase of \$2.9 billion since the last report in 2003. According to the report, which solicited information from local leaders from around the state, only \$10.1 billion of the needed \$24.4 billion has been made available.

In his letter, DeLay warned lawmakers of the implications of inadequate infrastructure funding. “Infrastructure is the very foundation of society, and its development and maintenance is one of the primary functions of government”, said DeLay. “Without basic infrastructure services – drinking water, sewer systems, flood control, a transportation network – the delivery of other services, such as education and health care, are impossible.”

Tennessee’s overall infrastructure funding deficit is broken down in the report into specific categories, including transportation and utilities; health, safety and welfare; and economic development. Only 46 percent of funds needed to meet Tennessee’s future transportation infrastructure needs have been identified.

Governments have set aside only 21 percent of funds needed for Tennessee's future economic development needs, according to the report.

"Adequate infrastructure means jobs for Tennessee's communities", said DeLay. "It is the key to safety, health and quality of life. We cannot ignore this growing problem".

DeLay encouraged the lawmakers to keep the state's infrastructure needs in mind as they return to their legislative duties in January. "The decisions you make in 2006 will have resounding effects for years to come", he said.

To view the TACIR report, go to
<http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/infrastructure.htm>.

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