



AASHTO Study Highlights Rural Transportation Needs

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A report released earlier this week by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) called for more investment in America's rural transportation system to keep agriculture, new energy products, and freight moving.

AASHTO, which represents state transportation departments in all 50 states, produced the report titled "Connecting Rural and Urban America" as the third in a series of reports generated to identify the need to increase capacity in our transportation system during reauthorization of federal transportation legislation.

In regard to rural highway needs the report noted that, "This network is particularly important for agriculture since crops usually move from the farm to local roads to lower classification Federal-aid roads before reaching a National Highway System (NHS), Interstate highway, or a railhead. These other Federal-aid routes provide an important link between the NHS and local roads and ensure that regions can connect to the NHS system."

The report discussed increased road demands brought about by growth in the renewable fuels industry. "Massive amounts of corn, soybeans, and other materials will have to be moved by truck and rail to ethanol and biofuel plants. Tanker trucks and tanker trains then need to move the liquid fuels to distribution points throughout the region." It also pointed out that, "windmill towers, blades, and generators need to be moved over significant distances to their point of installation. This requires trucks capable of moving long, wide, and heavy pieces of equipment that often require special permits to be moved over state highway systems."

Commenting on the findings of the report, Marvin Childers, President of The Poultry Federation, stated that "Rural roads are critically important to the success of our industry. Getting feed delivered to our farms and the chickens, turkeys, and eggs delivered from the farms to our processing plants in a timely manner must take place for our industry to succeed. Trucking is a critical mode of transportation for rural America. It carries 70% of agricultural and food products and provides the link between farmers, manufacturers, processors, and markets. We cannot survive without a quality transportation system."

The press release is available at this link:

http://news.transportation.org/press_release.aspx?Action=ViewNews&NewsID=335

The full report can be found here:

http://expandingcapacity.transportation.org/connecting_communities/images/Connecting_Communities_0810.pdf