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“We Must Invest in Infrastructure or We Are Cooked as a Nation”
*Former Pennsylvania Governor Rendell Urges Expanded Use of Tolling, TIFIA
and Public-Private Partnerships to Grow the Economy and Create Jobs*

(WASHINGTON—March 7, 2011) In spirited remarks to members of the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell urged Congress to pass a highway bill that expands the use of tolling, TIFIA, and public-private partnerships.

“This is a critical time for our country,” Rendell said. “The conditions could not be better than they are right now for investing in infrastructure. We need your help. We need you to be apostles.”

“There are several things we can do to improve our infrastructure. First, we need to get rid of the prohibition on tolling the interstates. Second, we need to quintuple the size of TIFIA. TIFIA is a loan program. It does a tremendous amount of good in helping to bring infrastructure projects to completion. We must grow it. And third, we need more Build America Bonds. What happened to BABs? Were the members of Congress so distressed by seeing Americans hard at work that they couldn’t renew the program? These are commonsense things we must do now to grow our economy and create jobs.

“We can do so many things that don’t have a big price tag. The next highway bill must clear the way for more expansive use of PPPs and lift the prohibition on tolling interstate highways,” Rendell said. He also said we should not be fearful of foreign investment in American infrastructure.

“If you don’t like having foreigners investing in America’s infrastructure, then you can’t fly to Orlando anymore because the Orlando Airport is run by Abertis, a Spanish company. Think about it. Wouldn’t we rather have foreign companies investing in our country instead of taking money out of our country?”

“A lot of people think it’s okay to stop investing because we’re in a recession. That’s wrong. If we stop investing in infrastructure, even in a recession, then our nation is cooked. We can’t grow our economy, we can’t grow jobs, and we can’t grow our country if we don’t invest in infrastructure.”

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“You will never convince the Congress directly that they should either increase gas taxes or allow tolling on the interstates. Therefore, you have to convince the hometown. When the folks from home reassure their members of Congress that they won’t be thrown out of office because they supported commonsense things like expanded use of tolling to improve infrastructure and create jobs, that’s when things will change.”

Rendell concluded by suggesting “We need a public education campaign to help people understand that infrastructure is one of the sexiest words around. When you invest in infrastructure, you grow the economy and create jobs. It’s as simple as that.”

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Edward G. Rendell served two terms as chief executive of the sixth-most-populous state and oversaw a \$28.3 billion state budget. As governor, he was a staunch advocate for strategic investments to energize Pennsylvania’s economy. Rendell made his remarks before the Legislative Conference of IBTTA, March 7, in Washington, DC.

The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association is the worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities and the business that provide products and services to the industry. IBTTA’s mission is to advance toll financed transportation. More information: www.ibtta.org.