



COMCAST

Before The Pennsylvania Senate
Transportation Committee

The Delay and Delivery
of Transportation Projects

Testimony Of

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February 2, 2016

Chairman Rafferty, Chairman Wozniak and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on The Delay and Delivery of Transportation Projects. My name is Jim D’Innocenzo and I am the Vice President for State Government, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs in Pennsylvania and Ohio. With me today is Jim Mellon who is Director of Construction for the Keystone Region of Comcast and Permit Coordinator Gregory Richmond also with the Comcast Keystone Region.

Comcast is the leading provider of cable, entertainment and communications products and services in Pennsylvania and the nation. Primarily, we are involved in the development, management and operation of broadband fiber optic networks and the delivery of programming content. We continually develop and deploy a range of new technologies and programming as part of our ongoing effort to improve the services we offer to our customers in approximately 1,400 Pennsylvania municipalities in parts of 46 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties. Here in Pennsylvania, our fiber optic rich plant encompasses over forty-two thousand (42,000) miles and we offer advanced services to over 98 percent of the more than four (4) million homes we pass.

However, Comcast only owns a handful of poles throughout the commonwealth as we pay pole and conduit owners for the right to use their assets. It should also be noted that Comcast’s and other cable operator’s lines are generally the last to attach to a pole during a construction project. Under that backdrop we would like to address the committee’s concerns regarding delays in transportation projects.

Notification of the Project:

Often the project information and plans are sent to someone who is no longer with Comcast or they are sent to Pittsburgh for a project in York because that is the last contact that a project coordinator used. We have nearly 300 offices in the Commonwealth and nearly 15,000 employees. This, in and of itself causes delays as the mail may not be opened by other employees or if the project plans are sent to the wrong location it will take additional time to determine which system is responsible for that particular project.

The 4181 – Transportation Form

As mentioned above, Comcast owns very few poles in Pennsylvania, we rely on the pole and conduit owners to coordinate our work and notify us when all other plant has been attached above our plant. If the pole/conduit owner does not provide us with the information in a timely manner we can’t properly complete the 4181 form resulting in yet another delay.

Relocating the Plant

A significant challenge occurs when projects are not contiguous and therefore need to be performed at random locations within the total project. Take for instance a project that is widening a several mile stretch of road with several bridge crossings and the project doesn't start at one end and end at the other but is completed in sections that are not adjoining. It is significantly more efficient for planning, scheduling and execution when projects are completed contiguously as opposed to having to come back and forth to a project on several different occasions. It is challenging to factor this into the workflow when estimating work completion times.

As you know, Cable plant is generally the last to attach so until all other attachments are completed, we are not permitted to begin our work. On numerous occasions, we have been called to complete our relocation work yet when we arrive we find that other utility lines above ours which haven't even been identified in the initial project plans have not been moved. This lack of planning by the project team creates additional delay as they need to identify the plant owner then we must wait for that utility to relocate their plant before we can continue our work.

Conclusion – Recommendation

From our perspective we recommend continued and regular communication with and between PennDOT, the project management team and all plant owners with progress reports that allow us to plan, schedule and perform our work in a timely fashion. A continued relationship with a contact in each PennDOT district with our regional and system construction teams would also go a long way to eliminate project delays and identify the correct construction expert in each of our regions and systems throughout the Commonwealth.

We thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and look forward to working with the Committee and all stakeholders to further the dialogue and assist in reducing the delay of transportation projects throughout the commonwealth.