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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mercer County Lawmakers Disappointed  
with Meeting Date to Discuss I-80 Tolling**

**HARRISBURG** – Mercer County lawmakers – Reps, Dick Stevenson (R-Grove City), Michele Brooks (R-Jamestown) and Mark Longietti, (D-Farrell), along with Sen. Bob Robbins (R-Greenville) – will be unable to attend a public meeting on Nov. 19 in Grove City due to legislative voting session in Harrisburg that day.

“Since before this legislation was enacted, my colleagues and I have known that the public needs to be involved in the future of I-80, because it is the very lifeline of the economy in Mercer County and much of northwestern Pennsylvania,” Stevenson said. “Although we are pleased public meetings will be held to discuss further details of the turnpike’s plans, we were extremely disappointed that the local meeting in Grove City will be held when we must be in Harrisburg for voting session.”

Act 44 was passed this summer as a way to generate nearly a billion dollars for roads, highways, bridges and mass transit. Part of that transportation package authorized the Turnpike Commission to toll Interstate 80 and use that revenue to pay back a series of bonds. The tolling of I-80, however, must receive federal approval.

The lawmakers, who have been opposed to Act 44 and voted against its passage, have been working together to ensure the public has a chance to be heard on the issue. They, in fact, requested the public meetings for the Turnpike Commission to present its plans for the future tolling and to address questions from those to be impacted by the tolling.

“I am very disappointed that this hearing was scheduled in conflict with the General Assembly’s session schedule,” Robbins said. “The truth is the Turnpike Commission knows full

well the opposition of the local delegation to the tolling scheme. During the past few months, I have been contacted by many individuals as well as industries that will feel the heavy burdens if these tolls are enacted. I hope that my constituents will take the opportunity to have their voices heard at the hearing.”

The Grove City meeting will be held from 4 to 8 p.m., Nov. 19, at Grove City College.

“From the very beginning, the public needed to have been included in the initial process before the legislation was advanced; however, we appreciate the Turnpike Commission following up on our request to hold public meetings to address the challenges that we are hearing local residents and businesses express if this tolling is approved,” Brooks said. “This potential tolling not only affects commuters and residents who use this highway on a daily basis, but every business and industry that relies on it to transport their goods through the region and across the country.”

“I have been working with local businesses, government officials and concerned citizens to help them prepare for the public meeting on Nov. 19,” Longiotti said. “We must drive home the point that tolling would significantly damage our economy and way of life, that more state money would be needed for our local roads due to traffic diversion, and that toll locations in Mercer County would be counterproductive.”

According to the Turnpike Commission, display materials and handouts will be made available before the public meetings and can be found on its Web site at [PATurnpike.com/180](http://PATurnpike.com/180).

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