Oral Statement of

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Regarding

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Founded in 1914, AASHTO represents the departments concerned with highway and transportation in the fifty States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Its mission is a transportation system for the nation that balances mobility, economic prosperity, safety and the environment.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

AASHTO

THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION

Good morning, I am John Porcari, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation. On behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), in my capacity as Chair of the Climate Change Technical Assistance Program Advisory Board, let me say that state DOTs are working to be part of the climate change solution.

Transportation represents approximately one third of greenhouse gas emissions, and it is estimated that highway vehicles generate 72% of those emissions.

To make a positive contribution to the issue of global climate change, AASHTO believes transportation policies need to reduce dependence on foreign oil, reduce energy consumption, and reduce travel demand, relative to current trends.

To achieve these goals AASHTO has called for:

- Reducing oil consumption by 20 percent in 10 years,
- Doubling the fuel efficiency of new passenger cars and light trucks by 2020, and the entire fleet by 2030, and
- Reducing the growth of vehicle miles traveled from the predicted 2 percent per year to 1 percent per year.

To reduce vehicle travel, AASHTO has endorsed:

- Doubling transit ridership by 2030,
- Significantly expanding the market share of passengers and freight moved by rail rather than trucks,
- Reducing the percentage of commuters who drive alone to 1980 levels, and
- Increasing the percentage of those who ride transit, carpool, walk, bike and work at home.

AASHTO is also working, through the publication of the *AASHTO Transportation and Climate Change Primer*, to outline for state and industry transportation leaders the current thinking on climate change and transportation. We have initiated a Climate Change Technical Assistance Program to supply states with timely information, tools and technical assistance to assist in meeting climate change challenges.

Let me turn now to the points that we believe should guide federal policy in this area.

First: The challenge before us is to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions, worldwide. We need to develop national policies that

reduce our own emissions and, where possible, contribute to the broader global effort to reduce emissions.

Second: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions worldwide will require a major contribution from every country and every economic sector, including transportation. No one can sit on the sidelines and wait for others to carry the burden. Transportation agencies stand ready to do our part.

Third: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will involve many separate initiatives. In the transportation sector, we need improvements in fuel economy; greater usage of low-carbon fuels; better management of our transportation system to reduce congestion and smooth traffic flows; *and* taking steps that reduce the growth in vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Fourth: We should focus on finding solutions that yield the greatest emission reductions at the least cost. In other words, cost-effectiveness should be a major consideration in setting policy

Fifth, and finally: We need major technological breakthroughs in order to have any chance of dramatically cutting global emissions of greenhouse gases. For transportation, this means not only

improvement in fuel economy, but ultimately a transition to entirely new fuels and new propulsion systems. With major breakthroughs in fuel economy and a slight tempering of travel demand growth – significant reductions in emissions from transportation are achievable, while still allowing for the travel growth needed to support our economy.

In recent decades, road travel has greatly increased, while the emissions of many harmful air pollutants have been significantly reduced. Technological innovation has made this progress possible: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions presents a new challenge, and technological advances will be just as important.

We are also seeing a tempering of growth in travel, due in part to higher fuel prices. Rather than growing at 2% or more annually, we have seen average VMT growth rates of one-half of a percent since 2004. Recently, the US DOT reported that cumulative vehicle miles traveled for 2008 declined by 2.1%. It is feasible – through a combination of measures – to achieve major reductions in greenhouse gases from road travel in the U.S.

Relieving traffic congestion is also essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The optimal speed for motor vehicles is about 45 mph. At lower speeds, emissions are several times

higher. If we can reduce the fuel burned by vehicles stalled in traffic, that is a gain. If we can improve the flow of traffic so fuel is burned at more optimal efficiency, that will also produce a gain.

In my own state, under the leadership of Governor Martin O'Malley, Maryland is developing a statewide Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Footprint Reduction Strategy to reduce emissions between 25 and 50 percent between 2006 and 2020 and to obtain 90 percent reductions by 2050. Transportation policies include slowing the growth of VMT, supporting the development and use of improved technologies and fuels, and other emissions reduction strategies, as well as promoting sustainable transit communities.

We are also evaluating what climate change and sea level rise will mean to our transportation infrastructure, given Maryland's 4,360 miles of shoreline. Fortunately, as a multi-modal agency with a flexible transportation trust fund and responsibilities for highway, transit, port and airports, we can work across the board in transportation to advance these important reduction strategies. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.