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Transportation Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Good Morning Senator Donald J. DeFronzo, Senator Bob Duff, Senator Antonietta Boucher, Representative Antonio Guerrero, Representative Thomas J. Kehoe, Representative Steven T. Mikutel, Representative David A. Scribner and members of the Transportation Committee. I would like to thank you for bringing S.B. No. 344, *An Act Concerning the Upgrade or Elimination of Hazardous Railroad Crossings at Grade*, for a public hearing today.

The content of this bill focuses on a pressing, but straightforward issue: the repair and improvement of long neglected roadways across our state. A majority of the railway crossings in the state have not been designed for the high impact traffic of heavy freight trucks and DOT plow trucks. Consequently, many of these roadways have deteriorated to an unsafe level of disrepair. In the past, the Federal government provided funding explicitly dedicated to the maintenance of railway crossings. With the transition to block form grants, the state has been able to apply broad Federal grants for transportation to those issues found to be most pressing. Unfortunately, intersections between railways and roadways have not been granted priority.

Given the exceptional burden that this past winter has placed upon the structural integrity of roadways in our state, I feel that it is as important today as ever before to commit funding to the repair of these high traffic areas. As the Department of Transportation has already begun to compile a list of at risk railway crossings, this bill simply provides guidelines for prioritizing and funding an initiative that this legislature has already embraced.

People often say that it is the little things we do that can make a big difference; this is just one small thing we can do to improve the infrastructure of our state, to maintain a healthy business environment, and to provide safe roadways for our friends, our families and our fellow citizens. As such, I thank you for your consideration and hope you will support this legislation.