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For more information, contact: Steve Swartz, (785) 296-3585, cell (785) 221-5615;
stevesw@ksdot.org

Secretary Miller offers suggestions to cut project costs and speed delivery

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A major highway project can take 15 or more years to complete, resulting in additional construction costs – not just from inflation but also from lost productivity caused by prolonged congestion and traffic accidents, Kansas Transportation Secretary Deb Miller told a House Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee Tuesday.

Secretary Miller, testifying on behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), told the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit that “state and local governments are overburdened with the excessive paperwork and the process it takes to advance even the least-controversial projects with no environmental impacts. Any effort to expedite project delivery should focus on making the process more efficient, without compromising environmental protection or opportunities for public participation.”

Secretary Miller recommends making refinements to existing federal programs designed to expedite project delivery, including expansion of a pilot program that empowers federal agencies to experiment with innovation.

“This pilot program could allow federal agencies to waive existing procedural requirements for projects that result in improved environmental and transportation outcomes,” she said. “We need to focus on outcomes, not rigid processes.”

Secretary Miller concluded her remarks by saying, “it is essential to find ways to deliver a better product, faster, cheaper and with better environmental results. We need more tools and ideas to stretch our precious resources and to enable us to deliver the best possible value to our customers for their transportation investments.”

Secretary Miller’s full testimony can read at <http://bit.ly/Testimony021511>.

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