PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY *This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy*		NUMBER: 7.03 APPROVAL DATE: 04-20-2004 EFFECTIVE DATE: 05-05-2004 REVISED DATE: 05-07-2024
POLICY SUBJECT: Debt Management	**RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:** Finance and Administration	

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish sound, prudent and appropriate parameters and to provide guidance governing the issuance, management, continuing evaluation of and reporting on all debt obligations issued by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission ("Commission"), and to provide for the preparation and implementation necessary to assure compliance and conformity with this policy. Recognizing the importance and value to the Commission's creditworthiness and marketability of the Commission's bonds, this policy is intended to ensure that any and all potential debt structures comply with all applicable laws and regulations, as well as sound financial principles.

B. Policy Statement:

Under the governance and guidance of its various Indentures, the Commission may periodically enter into debt obligations to finance the construction of infrastructure and other assets, fund Act 44 obligations or to refinance existing debt for the purpose of meeting its responsibilities to users of the Turnpike. It is the Commission's desire and direction to assure that such debt obligations are issued and administered in such fashion as to obtain the best long-term financial advantage to the Commission.

The Commission will limit long-term borrowing to fund primarily capital improvements, projects, or equipment that cannot be financed from current financial resources. In an effort to maximize capital funding availability, the Commission shall utilize a reasonable mix of borrowing and pay-as-you-go funding. The Commission will not fund current operations or normal maintenance of the Commission from the proceeds of long-term financing.

The Commission shall seek to maintain investment grade bond ratings so borrowing costs are minimized and access to credit is preserved. It is imperative that the Commission demonstrates to rating agencies, investors, creditors and users of the Turnpike that Commission officials are following a prescribed financial plan and adhering to sound financial policy. The Commission will follow a practice of full disclosure by regularly communicating with bond rating agencies and Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA) operated by the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) to inform them of the Commission's current financial condition and future financial outlook.

The Commission will strive to review this Debt Management Policy on an annual basis and update it on a timely basis as necessary.

C. <u>Uses:</u>

Bond proceeds are limited to financing the costs of planning, design, land acquisition, buildings, permanent structures, attached fixtures or equipment and "rolling stock" equipment or to fund Act 44 Obligations. Generally acceptable uses of bond proceeds can be viewed as items that can be capitalized where possible. Non-capital furnishings and supplies are not to be financed from bond proceeds. Refunding bond issues that are intended to restructure currently outstanding debt in order to reduce debt service costs are an acceptable use of bond proceeds.

The Commission may use short-term borrowing to finance operating needs but only in the case of an extreme financial liquidity condition that is beyond its control or reasonable ability to forecast.

D. <u>Decision Analysis:</u>

The Ten Year Capital Plan ("Capital Plan") is the process for identifying both short and long-term needs, establishing priorities, examining long-range financial implications and the overall effectiveness of funding such long term needs with debt. The Capital Plan will be prepared on an annual basis and will list each project and its priority, its estimated cost and proposed funding source. The Commission will measure the impact of total debt service requirements including both outstanding and proposed debt obligations on one, five, ten and thirty-year periods. This analysis will include debt service maturities and payment patterns.

The Commission will use the services of qualified internal staff and external advisors to assist in the analysis, evaluation, and decision process. In addition to debt analysis, the decision process may include financial, government and economic reviews. For example, potential funding streams may be identified and their respective financial and legal impacts assessed versus various alternatives.

E. <u>Specific Debt Policies, Ratios and Measurement</u>

This section of the Debt Management Policy establishes guidance for target debt policies, ratios and measurements for the Commission in the following categories:

A. Constraints, Ratios and Measurements

B. Measurements of Future Flexibility

A. <u>Constraints, Ratios and Measures</u>

The following constraints, ratios and measures shall govern the issuance and administration of debt obligations:

1. Purposes of Issuance - The Commission will issue debt obligations for acquiring, constructing, reconstructing or renovating Capital Improvements or for refinancing existing debt obligations for any other permitted purpose. The Commission may also issue debt to meet its obligations under Act 44 of 2007.

2. Maximum Maturity - All debt obligations shall have a maximum maturity of the earlier of: (i) the estimated useful life of the Capital Improvements being financed; or, (ii) thirty years (unless a longer term is recommended by external advisors): or, (iii), in the event they are being issued to refinance outstanding debt obligations, the final maturity of the existing debt obligations being refinanced, or the latest estimate of the useful life of the capital improvements originally financed with the refunded bonds.

3. Annual Debt Service - The Commission will strive to structure debt issues to maintain a level or declining overall annual debt service structure.

4. Variable Rate Debt – The Commission will strive to maintain unhedged variable rate debt levels no greater than 25% of its total outstanding debt. On a periodic basis the Commission will reassess its acceptable level of variable rate debt assets in order to maintain a relative balance that mitigates potential long-term interest rate risk exposure under conditions of either rising or declining market interest rates.

5. Present Value Savings – The Commission shall continually monitor its outstanding debt for the purpose of determining if existing financial marketplace conditions afford the Commission the opportunity to refund existing issues and lessen debt service costs. In order to consider and favorably recommend the possible refunding of an issue, the Commission will generally look to attain at least a minimum acceptable threshold level of net Present Value (PV) savings over the life of the respective issue.

6. Bond Covenants and Laws - The Commission shall comply with all covenants and requirements of the bond resolutions, and state and federal laws authorizing and governing the issuance and administration of debt obligations. Further, the Commission shall consult with bond counsel regarding any such legal issues.

7. Rate Covenant as to Tolls for Traffic - The Commission covenants that at all times it will establish and maintain schedules of tolls for traffic over the system so that net revenues will be sufficient to provide funds for the greater of:

a. 130% of annual debt service for such fiscal year on all applicable long-term indebtedness; or

b. 100% of maximum annual debt service on all applicable long-term indebtedness, plus amounts of required transfers to Reserve Maintenance Fund and amounts to restore deficiencies in the Debt Service Reserve Fund;

plus, in either such case, the amount of short-term indebtedness outstanding for more than a year. In addition, net revenue in excess of the sum of the amounts of (1) and (2) above, together with other revenues pledged to the payment of subordinated indebtedness, shall be sufficient to pay the annual debt service for any subordinated indebtedness.

8. Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) - The Commission shall continually monitor its outstanding debt for the purpose of determining the DSCR are at or above policy ratios of 2.0x for Senior Revenue Debt, 1.3x for Subordinate Revenue Debt and 1.2x for all toll revenue supported Debt.

Capitalized terms used on this page are defined in the Commission's restated indenture for its toll revenue bonds.

B. <u>Measurements of Future Flexibility</u>

The Commission's future flexibility is governed through the following Indenture covenants and policies:

1. Limitations on Issuance of Additional Bonds – The Commission agrees that it will not issue any additional bonds constituting long-term indebtedness unless the following conditions are met:

a. Historical pro forma debt service coverage ratio for the most recent fiscal year was not less than 1.75.

b. Net revenues of the Commission during the preceding fiscal year were at least 130% of the maximum annual debt service and the projected debt service coverage ratio is not less than 1.30.

2. Structure of Additional Bonds - The Commission will attempt to structure bond issues with call provisions consistent with current market conditions and with a goal to maximize flexibility with future refunding opportunities. The Commission may use premium or discount bonds to enhance the marketing of the bonds and will analyze the cost in relation to future refunding opportunities and impact on debt service. Finally, the Commission may consider using capitalized interest only if there are budgetary constraints that need to be addressed by phasing in debt service impact.

3. Uncommitted General Fund Balance – The Commission will adhere to its Liquidity Policy that requires minimum balances to be maintained at all times in the Reserve Maintenance Fund and General Reserve Fund. The Policy is specifically stated as follows:

"The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission will budget and maintain a cumulative Fund Balance, including cash balances in both the Reserve Maintenance Fund and the General Fund, equal to the greater of either the annual debt service of bonds not secured by a Debt Service Reserve Fund or 10% of annual budgeted revenues."

F. <u>Sale of Bonds:</u>

The Commission shall choose the method of sale of its bonds (competitive versus negotiated) in light of financial and market conditions as well as considering an assessment of the different benefits associated with each method.

The Commission shall require its financial advisor in conjunction with the senior underwriter(s) to prepare a marketing plan that includes recommended distribution rules (that will enhance the marketing effort), descriptions of similar transactions in the market place and their rates of interest, prevailing market information and any other financial information deemed relevant.

G. <u>Derivative Products:</u>

The Commission will consider the use of derivative products in connection with the overall debt plan as a means of reducing debt service costs, increasing flexibility, hedging interest rate risk and accessing different investor markets. Additionally, the Commission will strive to only use derivative products after an analysis of the economic benefit of the interest rate swap market in relation to traditional financing methods has been undertaken and indicates a significant financial economic benefit without excessive or unacceptable levels of risk.

The Commission will comply with prevailing state law, if any, regarding the use of derivative products as well as applicable disclosure requirements.

The Commission has developed a separate Interest Rate Swap Policy. The policy addresses such issues as Scope and Authority, Conditions for the Use of Interest Rate Swaps, Interest Rate Swap Features, Evaluation, Management and Monitoring of Interest Rate Swap Risks and Selecting and Procuring Interest Rate Swaps. The Commission's policy and guidelines regarding Interest Rate Swaps are documented in the Commission's Interest Rate Swap Policy.

H. <u>Disclosure and Financial Reporting:</u>

The Commission will ensure that there is full and complete disclosure to rating agencies and other applicable regulatory bodies of all debt obligations. Offering documents for debt of the Commission shall also fully describe all outstanding debt as well all relevant information regarding the Commission and the particular financing transaction as required under federal securities law, subject to advice of bond counsel. The Commission will adhere to the guidelines for the financial reporting of debt obligations as recommended by the applicable regulatory agency.

This Policy Letter supersedes all previous Policy Letters on this subject.