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Statement from Fred Frecker, President of Flexible Pavements Ohio, on the final report issued today by the NTP to the Pavement Selection Advisory Council

The Pavement Selection Advisory Council process began with accusations of ODOT's perceived bias towards asphalt pavement. The neutral third party report finds no such bias. It in no way questions ethics of ODOT's past pavement selection decisions. Earlier this year a report from the Ohio Inspector General cleared ODOT of similar allegations.

This issue has been examined and re-examined by respected authorities. No bias has been observed at any level. It is our hope that this puts to rest suggestions of bias and that we can return to comparing pavement types based on economic and performance merit.

ODOT's predominant use of asphalt reflects the national practice. Across the country asphalt is the paving choice for 95% of all state, county and township road surfaces with trends pointing towards increased usage in the future. This choice can be attributed to the economic advantages asphalt offers and its long-term performance. It's simply a superior paving product and offers advantages that cannot be ignored by responsible stewards of tax dollars.

Perhaps the most accurate characterization of the recommended changes comes from the neutral third party itself:

- "The issue of systemic bias raised by OCCA was not something the NTP believes can be solved through technical modifications. This must be addressed by the OCCA through effective marketing, education, product improvement, etc." (page 30)
- "The current system has most of the components in place and the intent of these recommendations is to strengthen certain aspects of the process and provide ODOT managers with needed flexibility." (page 31)
- The third party described his recommendations in testimony as "minor, moderate" and "incremental" changes that do not constitute an "overhaul" or "throwing out" of the current system; instead, it recommends a "tweaking" of the current system and finds that ODOT's policies "fit right in" with those of other states examined in the study.
- The neutral third party calls ODOT's current pavement selection system "innovative" and recognizes that it "attempts to be objective."

The primary change recommended by the neutral third party is the combination of initial cost and future maintenance costs into one "Lifecycle cost." Both of these factors existed in the old system as separate items. The combination of the two is simply a restructuring of the current system and will not favor one industry or the other. The neutral third party's recommendations are even handed and aim to improve the current process.

As always, we in the asphalt paving industry will continue to adapt our product to meet the needs of our most important customer, ODOT. With the conclusion of this thorough investigation the allegations of bias should now be dismissed once and for all.