



DATE: March 22, 2006

TO: Chairman Phil LaJoy, House Transportation Committee
Chairman Judson Gilbert, Senate Transportation Committee

FROM: Detroit Regional Chamber

SUBJECT: Detroit River International Crossing Study

The Detroit Regional Chamber has been involved for over a year as part of the Local Advisory Council of the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Study. Participation as part of the LAC has been a very valuable and insightful experience.

The Michigan Department of Transportation project manager has been very open and forthcoming with information about the DRIC process. The monthly meetings have been announced and open to the public (some meetings have accommodated hundreds of people and numerous policymakers). The content has included in-depth information sharing, including explanations of the need for a new crossing and processes for identifying location and type of crossing appropriate for Southeast Michigan. LAC members represent a diverse cross-section of interested stakeholders in the process, though some members have opted to recuse themselves from the process either because their communities no longer are faced with being home to a future crossing or their particular proposal has been excluded from decision making.

In the latter case, we feel that decisions to exclude possible crossing options were made taking into account needs on both sides of the border—not just one side or the other. As we are in constant communication with Canadian members involved in the advisory process, we feel that these decisions have been made fairly, based first on fact and sound data, all of which has been presented to the LAC. In fact, our Canadian colleagues have commented on the high level of transparency of the U.S. study process relative to the Canadian.

Moreover, LAC members have had opportunity—as has the public—to comment on DRIC processes and decision making. Comments have come from multiple camps, including those with direct and indirect interests in the outcomes of the DRIC process. To ensure proper education of advisory council members, DRIC project managers have gone so far as to host a joint meeting of the LAC and its Canadian counterpart: the event took place on a boat that toured the Detroit River and included detailed visual and verbal analysis of each crossing location, the affected communities, environmental considerations and more.

While no process involving decisions about major regional infrastructure can be perfect, we are confident that this process has been as open as fair as any such process possibly can be. The project managers are sincere in their desire to listen, evaluate, and make even-handed decisions in the face of great political pressure from all sides.

The Detroit Regional Chamber position is that there is a need for a new border crossing in Southeast Michigan. An estimated \$US 1.2 billion in trade crosses the U.S.-Canada border daily—over 40% of it at the five international, land-border crossings in the Detroit/Windsor Region. Of this daily trade, as much as \$US 234 million is automotive related. In the midst of this, regardless of when one believes our current crossing capacity will be surpassed, we cannot ignore the fact that the infrastructure currently in place is aging. Given this and the very real security threats of today's world, we must ensure appropriate infrastructure redundancy.

For your reference we have attached a policy statement on the borders that has been jointly approved by the Detroit Regional Chamber and Windsor & District Chamber boards. If you have any questions about our involvement in DRIC or other border-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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