



MICHIGAN
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
P.O. Box 30014
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909-7514

January 25, 2006

The Honorable Phil LaJoy
State Representative – 21st District
Chair, House Transportation Committee
State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48913

Dear Chairman LaJoy:

We are writing in response to media reports about a letter that you sent to Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Director Gloria Jeff about the Detroit River International Crossing Study (DRIC). According to your letter, there is concern that the study process reached conclusions without explanation of how decisions were made and without adequate discussion.

First, we welcome your input and participation in discussions concerning the future of Michigan's border crossings. As you know, Michigan retains a competitive advantage in the global economy because of its strategic location with Canada, access to the Great Lakes, transportation infrastructure and its historic role as a leading international trade partner among states. According to early feasibility analyses related to the DRIC, one out of every four jobs in Michigan is directly tied to international trade. The more than \$100 billion of annual trade that crosses the borders between Michigan and Canada far exceeds the value of any other border crossing and is approximately twice the value of all American trade with Japan. These are critical issues to Michigan's economic future and we welcome additional discussion of these issues.

Second, we are writing to assure you that the DRIC Study has been an open and participatory process. This process began with Director Jeff briefing legislators, at the behest of Representative Tobocman, in the Capitol on February 23, 2005. All of our offices have attended various public hearings, local advisory committees, and other meetings as part of the process. In fact, state legislators from each of the *affected* districts have been at the table eagerly participating in the first proactive and comprehensive bi-national effort to ensure that Southeast Michigan has the transportation infrastructure capacity to accommodate future growth in international trade. Fourteen Michigan state legislators sit on the Local Advisory Committee for the study, which has conducted 10 meetings since it was formed in March 2005. Several legislators filed comments during the scoping phase of the DRIC. In addition, six Wayne County Commissioners, the Wayne County Executive office, and the offices of US Senators Levin and Stabenow and

Congressman Conyers and Cheeks-Kilpatrick are also represented on the Local Advisory Committee.

MDOT has been responsive to the local communities directly impacted by a potential new border crossing. In addition to the meetings and hearings formally required by the process, Director Jeff personally appeared at a Senate Transportation Committee hearing in Grosse Ile designed to allow residents to voice their questions, concerns, and opinions. Once the DRIC focused on the Delray neighborhood in Southwest Detroit, MDOT embarked on a series of five meetings with residents to further narrow down the possibilities for crossing locations. A much more ambitious effort to work with the community than any of the private proposals, MDOT is working to create master plan for the community to mitigate the impacts of a new crossing.

Third, the DRIC conclusions have been based upon extensive research and deliberation. MDOT consultants conducted an analysis of 37 crossing sites using seven factors, working with both external and internal assessments of these factors in order to give the public an opportunity to weigh in. Crossing sites were eliminated due to their inability to accommodate the needs of regional mobility. Transportation computer models were used to eliminate potential crossings that did not alleviate congestion problems at the border. Other crossing proposals were eliminated due to the increased homeland security concerns of the Department of Homeland Security that redundancy needs to be created at the Detroit-Windsor border so that crossing alternatives exist in the case of a terrorist strike.

Not all of the undersigned legislators are pleased with the results of the DRIC to date. Specifically, Representative Tobocman has been a strong and constant voice about the negative impacts on local communities that host a border crossing. Yet, even his office has been supportive of the DRIC process.

Fourth, the DRIC process is critical. It represents the first proactive and comprehensive bi-national effort to ensure that Southeast Michigan has the transportation infrastructure capacity to accommodate international trade. The importance of global commerce to Michigan is too important to rely upon the actions of any particular private border operator. Just as our state has invested in building and maintaining an adequate interstate system, it must invest in insuring that it retains appropriate border infrastructure. The role of private operators within that system is certainly an excellent topic for discussion, but that discussion should be led by the State of Michigan, the U.S. federal government and our counterparts in Canada. The DRIC study represents the first comprehensive effort to conduct such a discussion and should be supported.

Thank you for your interest in this important topic. We look forward to your participation in the DRIC study and are excited that you have decided to join us at the table.

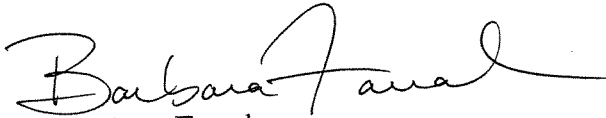
Sincerely,



Mary Waters
State Representative – 4th District



Steve Tobocman
State Representative – 12th District



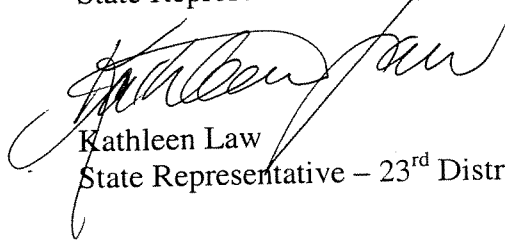
Barbara Farrah
State Representative – 13th District



Ed Clemente
State Representative – 14th District



Hoon-Yung Hopgood
State Representative – 22nd District



Kathleen Law
State Representative – 23rd District

cc: Representative Shelley Goodman Taub, Chair, House Appropriations
Transportation Subcommittee
Senator Jud Gilbert, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
Senator Shirley Johnson, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee