

News Release

Communiqué

BI-NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION BORDER STUDY ACCELERATED

TORONTO – The Canadian, U.S., Ontario and Michigan governments today announced they are accelerating their long-term planning study aimed at improving traffic flow at the border of Southwest Ontario and Southeast Michigan. Formal environmental processes will now begin under the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act* and the *U.S. National Environmental Policy Act*. This environmental assessment will also meet the requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

The four governments are working together closely as the Canada-U.S.-Ontario-Michigan Border Partnership. The partners came together to streamline and accelerate the planning and environmental processes through the creation of a single, integrated process that will meet the legislative requirements of both countries. The Bi-National Partnership demonstrates the commitment by the four governments to work together to improve transportation infrastructure in Michigan and Ontario.

“The potential effects of improving traffic flow at the border on trade, our economies, national security and quality of life are complex and significant,” said Canadian Transport Minister David Collenette. “We must work as quickly as possible while ensuring that meaningful consultations are part of the process as we address these important issues.”

“The importance of the intersection of the U.S. and Canadian transportation networks in Detroit and Windsor cannot be understated,” said Jim Steele of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. “This is an issue shared by all four governments, and the solution should be, too. Seeing the Partnership move together and push forward is great news for people on both sides of the border.”

“I am pleased that we are accelerating the planning process by one year. We will integrate the Planning/Needs and Feasibility study with the start-up of formal environmental work to improve the Windsor-Detroit border quicker,” Ontario Minister of Transportation Frank Klees said. “There will be full public consultation during this process.”

“Getting this process completed sooner is in the economic and security interests of all U.S. and Canadian families,” said Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. “Increasing the efficiency of our international border crossings, while improving their safety, is key to our plan. Just as problems face us now, developing solutions must begin now.”

A Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement has already been published in the Federal Register in the United States. The initial stages of the environmental assessment, the scoping and terms of reference studies, will be initiated while work on the current Planning/Needs and Feasibility Study proceeds. Consultation on the major findings of the Planning/Needs and Feasibility Study is currently underway. These findings will serve as the foundation for the next steps in the formal processes.

This study will now enter the second of a six-stage integrated planning and environmental process. The team will continue to invite key stakeholders and the public to provide input and advice through consultation groups and public information open houses.

For more information on the Bi-National Partnership its studies and the schedule of upcoming Public Information Open Houses, go to www.PartnershipBorderStudy.com. Comments can also be left at the Project's toll free phone number at 1-800-900-2649.

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