

Patterson and Francis Announce Support for DRIC Downriver Border Crossing Project

Pontiac, MI, July 9, 2008 – Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis today joined forces to support the downriver Detroit-Windsor border crossing near Zug Island proposed by the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Study.

“The DRIC Downriver Border Crossing is the absolutely best alternative because it will significantly ease traffic congestion between Detroit and Windsor thus enhancing the ability of companies on both sides of the river to get their products to market in a timely and efficient manner,” Patterson said.

The DRIC study indicates that Canada-US trade supports \$7.1 million U.S. jobs including 221,500 Michigan jobs and one in three Canadian jobs.

Last year, Canadians made more than 1.2 million visits to Michigan and spent \$208 million. Michigan exports to Canada total \$13 billion, representing 61% of its foreign sales. In addition, the U.S. exports about \$135 billion worth of goods every year to Ontario. To put this in perspective, the U.S. sells only \$55 billion annually to all of China.

“The Windsor-Detroit Gateway is more than a river crossing. It is not only vitally important to the economies of Windsor and Southeast Michigan, it is a critical supply chain stretching from Montreal to the Port of Los Angeles. Windsor supports the preferred location announced recently by the bi-national study to locate the next crossing in the Brighton Beach industrial area of the city,” Francis said.

Patterson and Francis also pointed that the bi-national approach provides a unique relationship between the U.S. and Canada to coordinate connected infrastructure and mitigate congestion

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issues on a bi-national level. In addition, they believe this alternative will result in enhanced competition, security and growth of the economies on both sides of the border.

Two bridge designs are currently under consideration for the downriver border crossing. One is a suspension bridge, similar to the Ambassador Bridge. The other is a cable stay bridge similar to the Denver Millennium Bridge. The cable stay bridge is less expensive and more in vogue today around the world.

Partners in the Detroit River International Crossing study are the U.S. Federal Highway Administration; Michigan Department of Transportation; Transport Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

The timeline for the project calls for property acquisition in 2009, construction starting in 2010 and the opening of the border crossing in 2014.

According to the Michigan Department of Transportation, the project will be government owned and maintained with the private sector playing a role in construction and operation of the facility. Details still need to be worked out.

The cost of the project to the U.S. will be approximately \$1.25 billion for the bridge, plaza and interchange. However, less than 10% of the total cost will come from Michigan, none of which will be General Fund dollars.

For further information, please contact Bob Dustman, Oakland County Media and Communications Officer, at (248) 858-1048 or dustmanb@oakgov.com or Norma Coleman, Windsor office of the Mayor, at (519) 255-6100 ext. 6977 or ncoleman@city.windsor.on.ca.

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