

March 22, 2006

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

Dear Chairman LaJoy:

The purpose of this letter is to express support for the planning process employed by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) as it relates to the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC). I feel it is appropriate for you to hold hearings and ask questions to insure that this critical project is proceeding in an appropriate manner.

SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, has been involved in the study, providing data and technical support to the principals of the study. It is our observation that the study has been conducted in a manner consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This process includes the systematic identification and review of all possible alternatives to identify how each fulfills the identified purpose and need for the project.

A key component to the process is public involvement. MDOT has held countless meetings with local units of government, members of the legislature, members of Congress, SEMCOG, members of the business community and potentially impacted citizens to explain various alternatives, identify potential benefits and concerns of each alternative and to hear the concerns of all involved.

The study has yet to come to a conclusion, so we do not yet know where or if an additional crossing will be recommended. It will be difficult to site an additional crossing on both sides of the river that will address the commercial needs of two countries, minimize potential negative impacts and address the environmental processes of two countries while maximizing the benefits to be derived. While the results of the study are not yet known, I am confident that the process that has been established will allow for maximum input for local units of government and members of the public and the business community to allow the best decision to be made.

If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Paul E. Tait, CAE
Executive Director
SEMCOG