



March 30, 2006

Joint Senate and House Transportation Committee Hearing
Re: Detroit River International Crossing

Dear Committee Members,

Michigan Environmental Council has concerns about the joint partnership study for a new Detroit River Crossing.

Concerns/comments:

1) There needs to be a serious consideration of the air quality/health impacts on this community of the diesel truck emissions of this project. Under National Environmental Protection Act(NEPA), this partnership must present a plan/reasoning that addresses the air quality issues of this project in the non-attainment area of Detroit. In addition NEPA and FHWA federal guidance for Mobile Source Air Toxics instruct federal projects of this magnitude to examine the extent these projects affect public health at a community level. This can be based on the 2000 existing scientifically approved studies and data that are available on mobile source toxics as instructed by the guidance. Canada is currently conducting these type of air quality studies for their communities because they are mandated by Canadian Law. If this study is supposed to rigorously examine all aspects of this project and using best practices for public involvement etc then we do not see the difficulty of using Canadian best practices to do similar assessments in the southwest Detroit affected communities since this is a joint project of both U.S-Canada.

-If the project moves ahead, despite conclusion of impacts on health/air quality then Michigan Environmental Council asks that serious mitigation efforts and improvements be made to the communities left in place including a new school to replace the already worn Southwestern High School, environmental consultants used to work with communities(48217), City of Detroit Asthma Alliance and the partnership on how to develop "low impact" or green development of plazas and other ways to mitigate health impacts on children and adults in the community.*(This is similar to the mitigation efforts brought forth in the settlement suit of Sierra Club vs. Nevada DOT)*

2) The Environmental Justice Analysis in this Study also needs to be given serious consideration as mandated by the Federal Environmental Justice Executive Order. Michigan Environmental Council is seriously concerned because in Southwest Detroit, 1 in 5 children already suffer from Asthma and African-American children are hospitalized for asthma at a rate 4.2 times higher than white children. Studies also reveal that diesel exhaust can trigger asthma attacks in individuals with no pre-asthmatic history. In addition, it is very apparent of the amount of already existing industry and truck traffic that runs through this community in comparison to other areas next to these Southwest Detroit communities

Michigan Environmental Council, Defending your water, land & air for 25 years

119 Pere Marquette Dr., Suite 2A • Lansing, MI 48912 • (517) 487-9539 • Fax (517) 487-9541 • mec@voyager.net
www.mecprotects.org



3) The proximity of Southwestern High School to this plaza is another concern. The exposure to these children from emissions and vibrations need to be seriously considered in the siting of this plaza. Children in this high school already have the highest drop out rate that can be related to the proximity of the already existing industries in the area and the existing traffic from the Ambassador Bridge

4) We also would like to comment that we support improvements that are needed to be made to the Delray community and we are disappointed with the City of Detroit policies that have not made efforts to help this community in addressing its needs. This left the community with few options to make these necessary improvements, one through possibly accepting a bridge plaza in their community. We hope that policies will be implemented so that communities such as Delray can make necessary improvements through city and state participation without having to make serious compromises.

5) If there is decision to move forward with this bridge or any other bridge project, Michigan Environmental Council strongly supports public ownership of these bridges. This public oversight can then allow for community input in the beginning stages of these projects.

6) We would like to see more involvement of Detroit city and state legislators working with the communities affected by this project in the decision-making process.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact me with questions/comments.

Sincerely,
Roshani Dantas
Michigan Environmental Council
roshanimec@voyager.net
517-487-9539