



**Testimony to
House Transportation Committee
From
Sarah Hubbard, Senior Vice President
Detroit Regional Chamber**

Madame chair and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the time to offer our views regarding the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) project currently underway in Detroit.

The Detroit Regional Chamber represents over 20,000 businesses throughout the Detroit region in ten counties. Our mission is to power the economy of southeast Michigan.

I'm here today on behalf of our members to express our support for the DRIC process and emphasize the need to build additional infrastructure to maintain and expand our global positioning as an international destination for trade and commerce. We believe public private partnerships bring new resources to our transportation infrastructure system and should be utilized for a variety of projects in Michigan including the DRIC bridge.

The Detroit / Windsor / Port Huron / Sarnia area is home to the busiest border crossing North America if you look at the volume of trade – over \$1 billion in goods crosses annually. Additionally, we are home to major passenger vehicle traffic – including 3000 – 4000 Canadian health care workers entering our region every day.

Border crossing capacity drives the economy of North America, and especially Michigan as the main thoroughfare for NAFTA and automotive trade. Transportation volumes follow the flow of the economy and as the economy rebounds, capacity at ports, rail lines and border crossings is again growing from increased traffic.

If we do not implement funding tools such as public private partnerships, we will lose business and population to states that do invest in transportation infrastructure. The DRIC bridge will bring over 10,000 jobs to Michigan and increase the size of our economy.

Many have asked me why the business community believes we need another bridge in our region. Isn't one enough? As a point of comparison, I'd like to point out that the Buffalo / Niagara region in New York is home to four separate bridges and is pursuing a similar project to ours to build a fifth bridge yet their volume of trade is far less. The logistics industry is extremely sensitive to the cost of bottlenecks and demands choices when entering the United States. The competition from an area like Buffalo to take advantage of cross-border trade should not be underestimated.

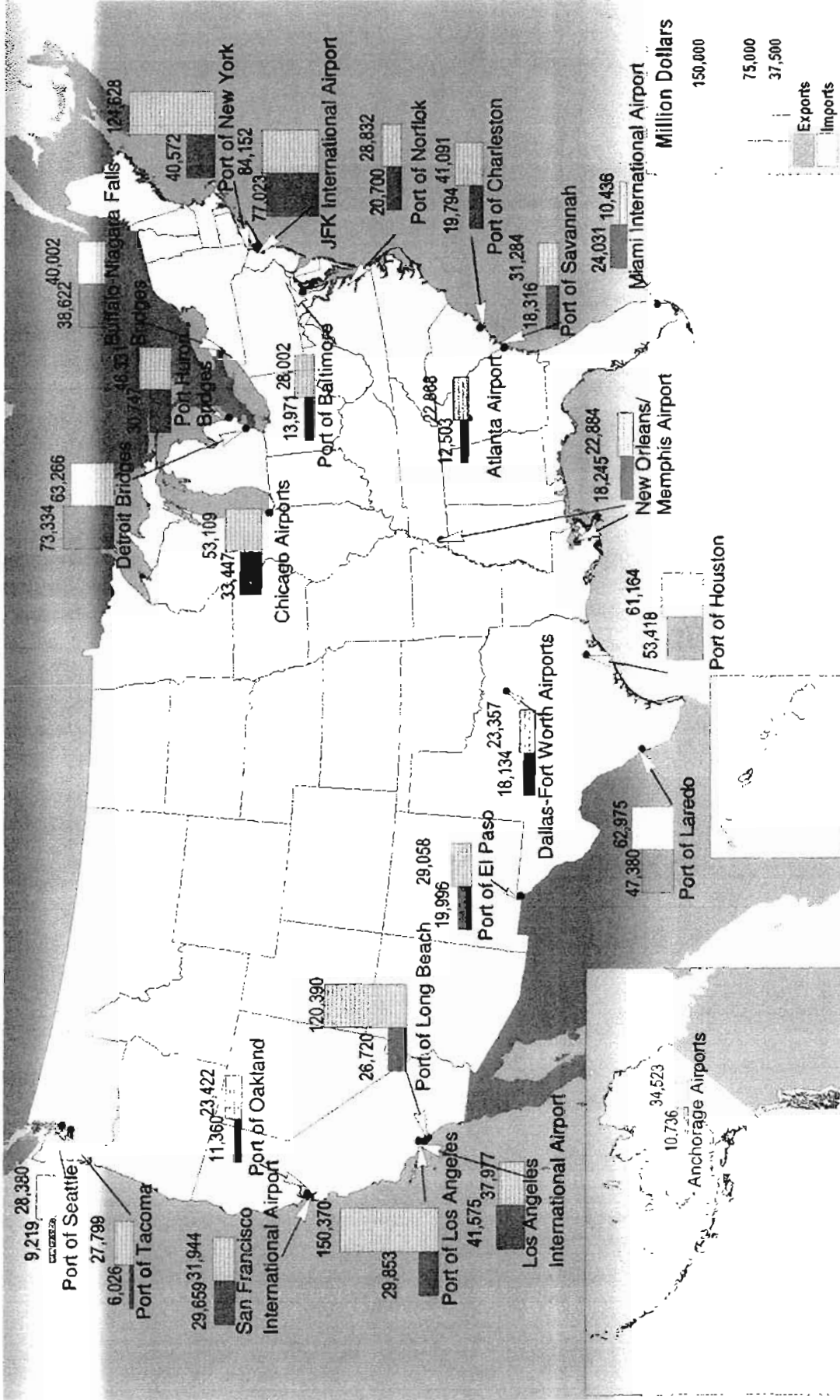
Our proximity to Canada is a competitive advantage for Michigan. If not for our connections to Canada, we are simply the end of the line – a peninsula state with no outlet. A left turn or a right turn on the map. With great access between the U.S. and Canada, we are the center of North American trade and a hub of economic activity driving our mutual growth. Limiting our ability to grow cross border trade has the effect of pushing that trade to other crossings, other ports, and other inland cities. Many of you have taken great interest in the Wayne County Aerotropolis project. Completion of the DRIC bridge will make that initiative stronger and allow us to better leverage our world-class airport.

While the United States lacks a coherent transportation infrastructure strategy that would focus on the movement of freight and help our economy grow, Canada has faced that issue head on and has moved to invest in their ocean ports. Some of you may be aware of the ocean going ports in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Montreal, Quebec. Both of these ports are enjoying significant public and private sector investment to spur their growth and take advantage of global logistics trade. Both of those ports have direct truck and rail connections to Detroit. We are in the process of creating strategic partnerships with them that will funnel new global trade into Michigan and help diversify our economy. Commitments from Michigan to continue to improve infrastructure and provide opportunities to lower logistics costs will allow us to turn that vision into a reality and market our region as a global inland port with seamless access to the heartland of the United States.

We have before us an opportunity to take advantage of the greatest economic development project in Michigan and build a new bridge to Canada – we urge you to meet the challenge, pass this legislation and support thousands of businesses of Detroit and Windsor in our efforts to grow our economy through a new bridge to Canada.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide our perspective.

Top 25 Foreign-Trade Gateways by Value: 2007



Notes: All data: Trade levels reflect the mode of transportation as a shipment enters or exits at a border port. Flows through individual ports are based on reported data collected from U.S. trade documents. Trade does not include low-value shipments. (In general, these are imports valued at less than \$1,250 and exports that are valued at less than \$2,500.) Water: Data are preliminary. Air: Data for all air gateways are reported at the port level and include a low level (generally less than 2%-3% of the total value) of small user-fee airports located in the same region. Air gateways not identified by airport name (e.g., Chicago, IL, and others) include major airport(s) in that geographic area in addition to small regional airports. In addition, due to Census Bureau confidentiality regulations, data for courier operations are included in the airport totals for John F. Kennedy International Airport, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, and Anchorage.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *National Transportation Statistics 2008*, available at www.bts.gov as of June 16, 2009.