



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

KIRK T. STEUDLE
DIRECTOR

September 4, 2007

The Honorable Raymond Basham, Minority Vice Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
Michigan State Senate
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Senator Basham:

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes great pride in the way we are conducting the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study. We urge you to visit the DRIC project Web site, www.partnershipborderstudy.com, where a wealth of information regarding study data and activities has been available since 2005. Additionally, we are pleased to provide you with copies of the monthly progress reports and accompanying project invoices for the DRIC study. The enclosed invoices and progress reports dating back to the initiation of the study in 2005 provide a detailed monthly history of the consulting team's efforts on behalf of the department. This information, along with all other material referenced in this letter, is being posted to the project Web site.

To ensure total disclosure, I would like to remind you that the DRIC study was the result of a previous bi-national effort that was initiated in 2002. Following the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent significant increases in border crossing times that followed, the four governmental agencies that make up the bi-national partnership (Transport Canada, the Ministry of Transportation for Ontario, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Michigan Department of Transportation) initiated a study for the purpose of looking at existing and future demand for border crossing services in the Detroit/Windsor area. The result of this study effort was the publication of the Planning Needs and Feasibility Study in January 2004, which is available on the project Web site at <http://www.partnershipborderstudy.com/stage1frame.html>. The significant finding of that study was the identification of the need for additional border crossing capacity sometime in the next 30 years, perhaps as early as 2015.

Following the completion of that study in 2004, the bi-national partnership initiated the DRIC study to determine where that additional capacity should be located, and how it should be integrated into the exiting transportation network on both sides of the border. While we do not have monthly progress reports for that earlier effort, we can provide you with the U.S. costs for that study (\$1.8 million), and the administrative and monitoring costs of MDOT's participation (\$111,200.00).

Enclosed is a set of graphs summarizing the expenditures to date, both in dollars spent and as a percentage of the study's budget. One graph shows expenditures by year, and the other shows how the funds have been allocated according to the various study activities.

As represented in the graphs, several expenditure categories highlight intrinsic tasks related to the scale of this project. For instance, in 2007 a significant portion of the expenditure for the DRIC study (approximately \$9 million to date, or 26 percent of the total project budget) is associated with a comprehensive geotechnical investigation program. The area of southeast Detroit that remains under consideration for the location of a new bridge is adjacent to areas with a known history of brine well activity. Much of this activity occurred at a time when documentation of individual wells was not required. The U.S. and Canadian study teams allocated funds for an extensive drilling and geotechnical analysis program on our respective sides of the border to ensure that the location chosen will be capable of supporting the proposed bridge. While the analysis of the data acquired from this program is still ongoing, we are confident the location of potential bridge foundations will avoid these wells.

Development of the environmental document and supporting technical reports also represent a significant portion of the expenditures to date (approximately \$5.2 million, or 15 percent of the project budget). A project of this magnitude requires the highest level of environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS requires substantial investigation and documentation to ensure full disclosure of the expected impacts of the proposed project, and a detailed plan for addressing those impacts. Thirteen technical reports are in the process of being drafted and reviewed, and those documents will supply the supporting detail to the draft EIS that is scheduled to be published in December of this year.

Two other important areas in a study of this magnitude are the development and evaluation of alternatives. Work on the preliminary (illustrative) alternatives (approximately \$2.3 million, or seven percent of the project budget) was completed in December of 2005, with the publication of three volumes of analysis. These volumes, analyzing 37 potential river crossing systems, including variations of 15 crossing locations, 14 possible plazas, and over 20 freeway connecting links, are available online at http://www.partnershipborderstudy.com/reports_us.asp. This analysis focused the remaining work to the current study area, which includes three possible crossing locations, one plaza area with several different plaza arrangements still under consideration, and approximately six different interchange options (approximately \$2.7 million, or eight percent of the project budget). It is our expectation that we will be able to identify a preferred alternative from these options in the spring of 2008.

We would also call your attention to the comprehensive public outreach program (approximately \$1.5 million, or four percent of the project budget) that has always characterized the DRIC study. Since the study began in January 2005, approximately 150 public meetings and workshops have been held, involving thousands of citizens in the area. Meeting information is available on the project Web site at <http://www.partnershipborderstudy.com/meetings.asp>. These meetings and workshops solicited public input into this very open and transparent process and were held to keep the public informed as we continue through the environmental decision-making process. In

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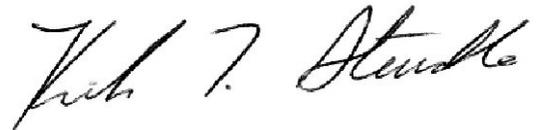
my opinion, keeping the public engaged and informed is the most important element of the study and as such, the department has gone well beyond state and federal requirements for public input and access to study information, to ensure that this objective is met.

Finally, MDOT's oversight and management of the DRIC study (approximately \$600,000 or two percent) includes direct and overhead costs for MDOT personnel who manage the contract and participation in public and internal meetings.

With approximately 62 percent of the study now complete, it is becoming increasingly clear that insufficient border capacity in southeast Michigan will have a significant economic impact to both the state and the nation. The DRIC process will identify the best location and option for a new crossing that will add redundancy and a seamless connectivity from Michigan's interstates to Ontario's highways in a location that is satisfactory to both countries. As such, the department is moving forward to ensure that environmental clearance, the necessary first step in the project development process, is completed on a sound basis. At this point we anticipate the publication of the draft EIS by the end of 2007, a public hearing early in 2008, and completion of the final EIS by late 2008.

If you have any questions, please contact either me or Ronald K. DeCook, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at 517-373-3946.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk T. Steudle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirk T. Steudle
Director

Enclosures