

NEWS RELEASE

September 24, 2004

Windsor/Detroit International Crossing – Significant Step Taken To Improve Efficiency and Safety

Improving Our Border Crossings

WINDSOR/DETROIT—A significant step has been taken towards improving the safe, efficient and secure movement of people and goods at the Windsor-Detroit border. The environmental assessment (EA) process to consider options to improve traffic flow at the Detroit River International Crossing can now get underway, the Canadian, U.S., Ontario and Michigan governments announced today.

Ontario's Minister of the Environment approved the Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference (TOR) moving this initiative forward to the next phase of the EA process. A Request for Proposals has now been issued to hire a consultant to undertake the Environment Assessment this fall.

"Addressing border transportation issues is a priority for governments at every level on both sides of the border," said The Honourable Jean-C. Lapierre, Canadian Minister of Transport. "Today's announcement is an important step to address longer-term capacity issues surrounding the busiest international trade corridor in North America. It proves that the Partnership consisting of Transport Canada, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and the Michigan Department of Transportation is moving forward with its plan to develop a long-term strategy to meet the needs of the transportation network serving the border between Southeastern Michigan and Southwestern Ontario."

"This is good news for the Windsor-Detroit border crossing," said Ontario Minister of Transportation Harinder Takhar. "We are committed to working with our partners to ease traffic congestion at our border crossings."

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation submitted the Environmental Assessment TOR to the Ontario Minister of the Environment for review and approval in May 2004. The preparation of the TOR is a step that is unique to the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*. Comments received through stakeholder consultations and public open houses held in March were considered in the TOR.

“The Michigan Department of Transportation fully supports the partnership and we are very pleased about TOR approval,” said MDOT Director Gloria J. Jeff. “Together, we are actively moving forward to address critical border crossing needs at the local, state and federal level now and in the future.”

The approval of the EA Terms of Reference means the next phase of the EA process can begin. Requests for Proposals have been issued to consultants on both sides of the border to undertake the formal Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement (EA/EIS) studies. The next phase of the project, involving route planning and environmental impact studies, is scheduled for completion in 2007 and will result in specific recommendations to address cross-border transportation issues. There will be opportunity for input and comment from groups and individuals with an interest in this project.

The Governments of Canada, U.S., Ontario and Michigan are working in partnership to ease traffic congestion at border crossings, creating strong communities and supporting economic growth.

For further information on the study to date, please visit the project website at www.PartnershipBorderStudy.com or contact:

- 30 -

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