

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2009

Chairman James Oberstar
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member John Mica
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

We strongly support the Interstate 69 national freight and passenger corridor and ask your support and assistance in providing long term dedicated funding to complete I-69.

We support the Projects of National and Regional Significance Program and ask the Committee to provide sufficient funding to complete I-69. While most of the Interstate System was built through the Interstate Program, the Program's termination left the I-69 states trying to construct this national asset without dedicated federal funds. The cost of completing I-69 exceeds the federal-aid formula apportionments of all the I-69 states. Even if they used all their federal formula funds for I-69 and did no other work, they would still not have enough to complete it.

I-69 serves the nation. Two sections of the system -- I-69 from Port Huron, Michigan at the Canadian border to Indianapolis and I-94 from Port Huron to Detroit and Chicago -- were opened under the Interstate Construction Program. Another section was completed and opened in Mississippi in October 2006. Work is underway on the rest of the Corridor. From Indianapolis, I-69 connects Kentucky; Tennessee; Mississippi; Arkansas; Louisiana and Texas. A \$7.9 billion federal investment will complete I-69 in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana during the period of this reauthorization. Another \$3.3 billion will advance I-69 in Indiana and Texas; and \$3.1 billion will upgrade I-69/I-94 in Indiana and Michigan.

I-69 serves 17 of the top 25 seaports, 13 inland waterway ports and 15 of the top 25 cargo airports. Every major railroad connects to the Corridor. Completion will increase transportation efficiency, reduce fuel consumption, travel time and costs, while facilitating trade, providing intermodal connectivity, relieving congestion and promoting economic growth. It will reduce the trip time between Port Huron, Michigan and Laredo, Texas by 8 hours.

The corridor traverses over 111 counties and hundreds of municipalities, directly serving over 23 million people. There are over 10.5 million people living below the poverty level in the Corridor states. Seven of the I-69 states have poverty levels below the U.S average. In the Houston to Indianapolis segment alone, I-69 will create 27,000 jobs, add \$11 billion in wages and produce \$19 billion in value added through 2025. In the same section it is projected to save 3100 lives, avoid 158,000 injuries and 409,000 property damage accidents. Completion of I-69 will significantly enhance safety and efficiency along this key freight corridor reducing emissions and stimulating economic productivity.

We appreciate the Committee's continued support of I-69 and ask it to include a dedicated funding mechanism to complete I-69, a key national freight corridor and intermodal link essential to enhancing U.S. global competitiveness in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Tom Tunney

John Boozman

Travis W. Childers

W. J. Dyer

Rodney Alexander

Craig Harper

Brett Little

Tomie Lehman

Brad Elbourn

Pete Olson

Ryan Paul

Mike Lee

Joseph

Joe Ponnally