

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the Administration further develops its proposals for the next surface transportation legislation, we urge you to include a provision to create a program to fund Projects of National Significance (PNS).

Despite previous efforts, a program to fund PNS based upon merit and meeting eligibility requirements has yet to be established. The next surface transportation authorization presents an opportunity to address this crucial shortfall by establishing a rational, merit based process to identify and fund vital projects that impact our nation as a whole.

This need is time sensitive. By adequately funding PNS, we can help hasten economic recovery and put Americans back to work. Additionally, doing so will help us to restore our world class transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

As you know, our national transportation system is required to accommodate more traffic than was originally intended, creating the urgent need for new investment. This includes the need to invest in functionally obsolete transportation nodes which impact our nation as a whole, but whose renovation cannot be undertaken financially by one or more States alone.

A prime example of this type of project is the Brent Spence Bridge spanning the Ohio River between Covington, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio. This bridge connects Canada to Florida via I-75, as well as Ohio to the western United States via I-71. It also feeds traffic and freight into Chicago via I-74. The bridge affects commerce in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee. Over \$400 billion of freight (three-percent of GDP) crosses the Brent Spence Bridge every year with an expected increase in real dollars to \$830 billion by 2030. In other words, the Brent Spence Bridge is essential infrastructure to the American economy.

The Brent Spence Bridge Project will ultimately cost between \$2 and \$3 billion to complete. When we compare that to the more than \$400 billion annually that the bridge carries for our economy, the cost is clearly justified. However, Ohio and Kentucky would both have to dedicate their entire State transportation budgets for over a year, in spite of everything else, to fund this project.

In the next surface transportation authorization, we have an opportunity to ensure that the I-71, I-74 and I-75 corridors continue their role in our national transportation system by building a new bridge at their crucial intersection. The achievement of this goal would support or create 83,000 permanent jobs and save businesses and motorists \$784 million annually.

Again, we ask your support for a provision to fund Projects of National Significance in the next surface transportation authorization. We pledge our efforts to work with you to ensure the opportunity is not lost to fulfill this longstanding need.

Thank you for your service and attention to our request. Please contact Dan Adelstein in Rep. Geoff Davis' office if you need additional information or assistance from any of our offices.

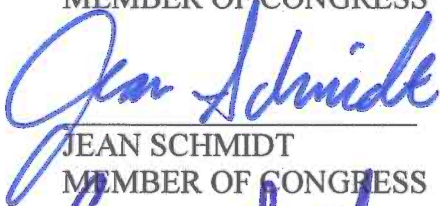
Sincerely,



GEOFF DAVIS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



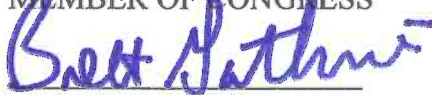
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