

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2009

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

As the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee begins consideration of the next surface transportation authorization bill, we write to request the inclusion of funding for the Brent Spence Bridge project. The Brent Spence Bridge spans the Ohio River at a critical artery, connecting Canada to Florida via I-75, and Ohio to the western United States via I-71, connects to Chicago through I-74 and affects commerce in more than fifty congressional districts. The project is of national importance.

By linking two existing segments of the interstate system the bridges will facilitate significant multi-state and regional mobility to enhance national economic growth. The new capacity will provide sustained growth for the future while reducing congestion and pollutants. The project will reduce commercial and other travel time and their associated costs by millions of dollars per year. The bridge is located on a major freight corridor; a corridor that will experience immense growth in the future. The Brent Spence Bridge meets established criteria for funding major interstate projects. Should the Brent Spence Bridge project be funded though a section of the bill specifically dedicated to "mega-projects of national significance" or as a free standing entity, it remains a critically important project.

Completed in 1963, the bridge was built to accommodate 80,000 vehicles daily. Handling more than double that volume today, the bridge has been determined to be functionally obsolete. Overburdening the bridge in this manner creates a significant safety hazard. Presently, the Brent Spence Bridge has the seventh highest accident rate of all interstate bridges in the nation.

The Brent Spence Bridge is a key part of America's Midwest transportation infrastructure and is vital to commerce in Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. An estimated \$417 billion of freight crosses the Brent Spence Bridge every year with an expected increase in real dollars to \$830 billion by 2030. The planned expansion of the Norfolk Southern and CSX railways would bring even more freight to the I-71, I-74, and I-75 corridors. Specifically, the proposed CSX facility in North Baltimore, OH will serve as a major rail freight hub. Additionally, Norfolk Southern anticipates a Spring 2010 opening of the Heartland Corridor from Norfolk, VA to Columbus, OH resulting in substantial increases to north-south truck traffic across the Ohio River (to and from the Columbus hub) and in particular across the Brent Spence Bridge. This is a vitally important commercial corridor and the aging bridge cannot meet increasing demand.

Our transportation system drives the economy by bringing materials to producers and products to consumers. When a key component of that transportation system fails to work effectively, the negative impacts ripple throughout the entire economy. We have an opportunity to ensure that the I-71, I-74, and I-75 corridors continue to play their role in our national transportation system by building a new bridge at their critical intersection. When we achieve this goal, we also will support or create 83,000 permanent jobs and save businesses and motorists \$784 million annually.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. For additional information please contact Aaron Wasserman with Congressman Steve Driehaus at Aaron.Wasserman@mail.house.gov, 5-6819 or Dan Adelstein with Congressman Geoff Davis at Dan.Adelstein@mail.house.gov, 5-3465.

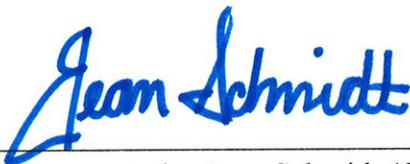
Sincerely,



Representative Steve Driehaus (OH-01)



Representative Geoff Davis (KY-04)



Representative Jean Schmidt (OH-02)



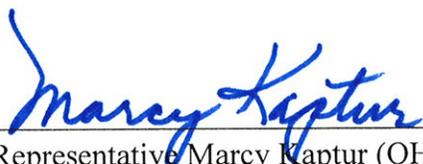
Representative Ed Whitfield (KY-01)



Representative Mike Turner (OH-03)



Representative Brett Guthrie (KY-02)



Representative Marcy Kaptur (OH-09)



Representative Harold Rogers (KY-05)


Representative Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11)


Representative Ben Chandler (KY-06)


Representative John Bocchieri (OH-16)


Representative Mary Jo Killroy (OH-15)


Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20)