

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1316

June 11, 2007

The Honorable Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor
207 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Blagojevich,

We are writing to express our disappointment and concern over the recent decision by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to withdraw state funding for a major road project that impacts McHenry County and all the communities in the northwestern Chicago region. The state funding commitment for the Western Bypass of Routes 31 and 62 in Algonquin was eliminated in the most recent 5-year transportation plan for the State of Illinois.

In 1998, Congressman Don Manzullo secured \$9 million in federal funding and designated the bypass as a "High Priority Project" in the federal transportation bill. The State of Illinois followed his lead and added the Western Bypass to the state transportation plan in 1999. At that time, the state allocated \$35 million in state funds to the project, bringing the total funding level to \$44 million – which was enough to build the road back then.

Over the last several years, the state has consistently scaled back its funding support for the Western Bypass, even though the federal government continued to make it a priority. The last straw came recently when we learned that the state had completely eliminated all state funding for the project and shelved construction plans.

The United States Congress made the Western Bypass project a priority in 1998 when it earmarked \$9 million for the project and again in 2005 when Congressman Manzullo and Senators Durbin and Obama earmarked another \$10 million for the northern extension of the project. In addition, Congress gave the State of Illinois \$6.2 billion in federal gas tax funds in 2005 for IDOT to use at its discretion to improve Illinois' transportation system, including the Western Bypass of Algonquin.

The State of Illinois needs to follow suit, prioritize funding for this project, and get it built. The McHenry County Division of Transportation estimates the total cost for designing and building the Western Bypass today at \$67,465,500. The State of Illinois must restore the tens of millions in previously allocated funds that it recently pulled from the project and earmark the additional funding necessary to complete the project.

The residents of McHenry County pay more than \$22 million in state motor fuel taxes each year in addition to the tens of millions more they pay in federal motor fuel taxes and state sales tax on gasoline. Yet, the county receives back a negligible amount of transportation funds from the state, even though it is one of the most congested counties in our state in dire need of traffic relief. It is time that the citizens of this region receive their fair share of transportation dollars so we can begin to reduce the gridlock that is impacting the quality of life and commerce in northern Illinois.

We invite you to come to McHenry County and meet with us to discuss the importance of the Western Bypass project, and others. We look forward to working with you and the Illinois Secretary of Transportation to address these critical transportation needs in McHenry County.

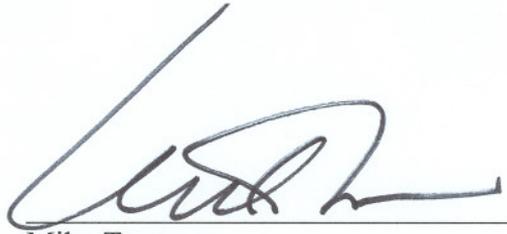
Sincerely,



Donald A. Manzullo
Member of Congress
16th District of Illinois



Pamela Althoff
State Senator



Mike Tryon
State Representative



Ken Koehler
Chairman, McHenry County Board



John Schmitt
Mayor, Village of Algonquin



Ed Plaza
President, Village of Lake in the Hills



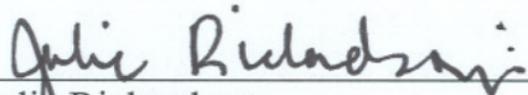
Aaron Shepley
Mayor, City of Crystal Lake



Chuck Sass
Mayor, Village of Huntley



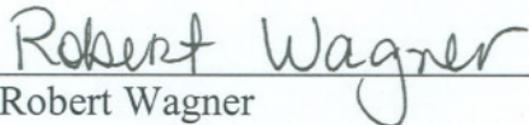
Steve Lamal
Mayor, Village of Cary



Julie Richardson
Mayor, Village of Lakewood



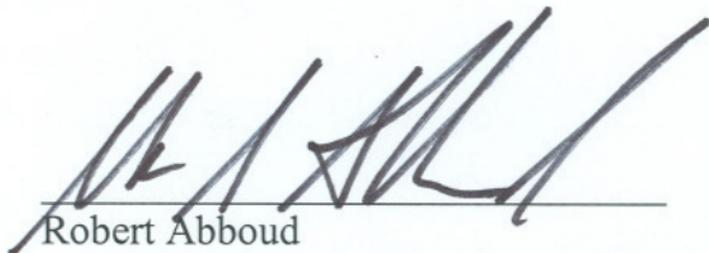
Don Lockhart
Mayor, City of Marengo



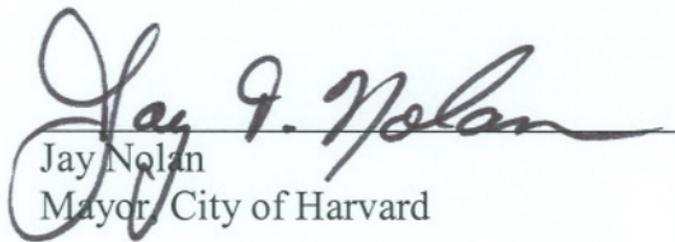
Robert Wagner
Mayor, Village of Union



Katherine Laube
President, Village of Fox River Grove



Robert Abboud
President, Village of Barrington Hills



Jay Nolan
Mayor, City of Harvard