



February 27, 2009

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
U. S. Senate
306 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1401

Dear Senator Lugar:

I am writing to ask for your consideration of the US 31 corridor project for the FY10 appropriations process.

As you well know, construction or preconstruction work has begun on the first three segments of the US 31 corridor improvement project, in St. Joseph/Marshall Counties, Howard County and Hamilton County. Groundbreakings have occurred in the northern and middle segments, and the Record of Decision has just been signed for the Hamilton County piece. Construction is expected to begin there in 2010-2011 respectively.

This work will leave only the segment between Howard and Marshall Counties, and the segment in Tipton County, to complete the entire freeway from South Bend to Indianapolis with no intersections or at-grade crossings.

This project is a critical part of the Indiana's National Highway System network. As a corridor of commerce, goods produced in the project region are shipped to consumers across the country. A number of key manufacturing facilities in the corridor rely on safe and efficient distribution systems to move their goods to market. In the past, corridor population and job growth rates were 50% higher than the state average, necessitating this project.

With recent economic troubles in Indiana, this project has taken on a new significance. In order to attract new industry and expansions to the corridor counties, the State needs to provide a reliable infrastructure system for commodities movement. Studies have shown that companies prefer to locate within ten miles of an interstate, or an interstate quality road. With the unimproved segments remaining on the US 31 corridor, the full benefits of efficient and safe travel are not realized.

Recent studies reveal that the upgrade of the entire corridor will provide numerous economic benefits for Indiana. When the project is finished, Indiana trucks will see travel time savings of almost \$500 M and cars will see another \$1.2 B in savings. In addition to the travel time savings, an improved highway will lead to new

The U.S. 31 Coalition is a group of citizens, companies and elected officials who are dedicated to the upgrading of U.S. 31 to a free-flowing thoroughfare connecting U.S. 20 in St. Joseph County to I-465 in Marion County.

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opportunities for business expansion, leading to an overall economic impact of \$1.3 B and over 5000 jobs. Safety will be improved as well, with \$2.6 B in safety savings being realized from the prevention of 2600 accidents per year.

I appreciate your consideration of this project for the FY10 Transportation Appropriations process. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you need any additional information. I look forward to discussing this project in more detail with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis E. Faulkenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "F".

Dennis E. Faulkenberg
Executive Director