

September 17, 2007

Mr. J. E. Williamson, Jr.
Chairman
Northwest Tennessee Regional Port Authority
P. O. Box 664
211 E. Court Street
Dyersburg, Tennessee 38025-0664

Dear Mr. Williamson:

Thank you for your follow up letter as a result of our meeting last month. As you know, I am very supportive of the development of Cates Landing and the future of I-69. As we discussed, a study is currently underway to investigate the requirements to convert US-51 to I-69. This study will be comprehensive and will include analysis of design speed, signing, clear-zone requirements, horizontal and vertical sufficiency, superelevation, pavement design, pavement striping, safety issues such as guardrail and pier protection, and an analysis of costs associated with the full conversion of existing US-51 to an interstate system (I-69). This report will be complete before the end of this calendar year. I also want to confirm that the section of future I-69 from Troy to Fulton has been funded for right-of-way acquisition.

In response to public comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC) requested that the Kentucky segment of SIU #7 from US-51 south of the Tennessee/Kentucky state line to Purchase Parkway in Kentucky be removed from this subject project, and that the proposed connection be made directly with the US-51 Fulton Bypass at South Fulton, Tennessee. As a result of the KTC's request, the preferred alternative will terminate at the Tennessee/Kentucky state line in the vicinity of the US-51/US-45E interchange at South Fulton, Tennessee. At a future date, work would be required to upgrade the US-51/US-45E interchange to allow for direct traffic flow from US-51/proposed I-69 to the existing US-51 Fulton Bypass. The study described above will address this issue from a high-level planning standpoint, which will include the assignation of projected traffic volumes and possible solutions to improve any anticipated deficiencies. As the section of future I-69 from Troy to Fulton is ready to be opened to traffic, we will have the portion from Dyersburg to Troy also brought up to interstate standards.

You also asked about the status of SR-22 from Tiptonville to the Port at Cates Landing. A public meeting was held on September 13, 2007 in Tiptonville and you had indicated previously that you and others from the Commission would participate. I have assigned Brian Hurst as the Project Manager for TDOT to ensure that this project moves forward. We currently have environmental technical studies underway and the engineering process should begin shortly after the public meeting. Funding for the right-of-way has been included in FY-2009 of our 3 year Transportation Improvement Program.

Your last request concerns improvements to Highway 78 in Dyer County. Our planning staff can certainly examine the issues you raise in regard to SR-78. By copy of this letter, I am requesting that Ms. Jeanne Stevens, Director of the Long Range Planning Division, take the necessary steps to initiate a discussion of this proposal with the members of the Northwest Rural Planning Organization. As you may know, the section of SR-78 from Tiptonville to I-155 is proposed for improvement as part of the County Seat Connector program and is currently being discussed with local officials as part of a statewide review of the program. A re-routing of SR-78 around Dyersburg's downtown area should certainly be discussed in this context.

It was a pleasure meeting with you. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Paul Degges, Chief Engineer, at 615-741-0791 and he will be glad to assist you.

Sincerely,

Gerald F. Nicely
Commissioner

GFN:NEC

cc: Representative Phillip Pinion, W/Attach.
Mr. Paul Degges, W/Attach.
Ms Jeanne Stevens, W/Attach.
Mr. Brian Hurst, W/Attach.