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Hon. Frank O'Bannon, Governor  
The State of Indiana  
Statehouse  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor O'Bannon:

I write about the harms threatened by the most recent I-69 proposals. If it is wise to build the extension, I believe that these principals should control:

- We must avoid the high cost of community damage.* Highway construction's harm to communities is considerable and this element of its cost is often undervalued. We are still recovering from the effects of the construction of I-65 and I-70 on our neighborhoods, our communities and our economy. Some of the people whose quality of life is now directly threatened moved to Decatur and Perry Townships years ago because they were displaced by those projects in other parts of town. This experience teaches us that we must avoid route choices dividing a neighborhood or community, whether to connect I-69 near Castleton through the city, or further south, in Decatur or Perry Townships, or anywhere else along its course.
- We must protect our natural treasures.* The bounty of Indiana's natural beauty is of great value, especially as our urban areas swell and sprawl. The cost to our environment of the various route proposals must be carefully reckoned. I urge a choice which minimizes harm to forest, field and farm, to wildlife and water, to parks and recreation, one which concentrates further

disruption in areas which have already been disrupted, sparing others still unharmed.

- *Economic development in one part of the state must not be furthered at the expense of another.* Several of the present proposals, insofar as they impinge directly upon the economic and community life of developing portions of Indianapolis, promise dislocation which will bring real disruption to values vital to the neighborhoods involved. Along Mann Road, for example, lies Southwestway Park, soon to be second only to Eagle Creek in size in our community. The expansion of the park and its offerings has engaged amazing neighborhood investment and fundraising in a straightened economy. Several of the proposed corridors lie along Mann road and would, as one Decatur Township resident put it, create "a Berlin Wall" between the park and the people.
  
- *The money might be needed for other things.* In addition to community and environmental costs, the dollar cost of highways is immense. We have lately seen the return of dire deficits in the federal budget, likely to last to the decade's end and beyond, even if we keep our military engagement at present levels. Meanwhile, our own economic challenges threaten the quality of life in Indiana. In the present environment it is not at all clear that funding for this project—or many others—will be available when needed. In the straightened circumstances of our nation and our state, frugal solutions are the most intelligent, especially those which offer a useful mix of transportation options.

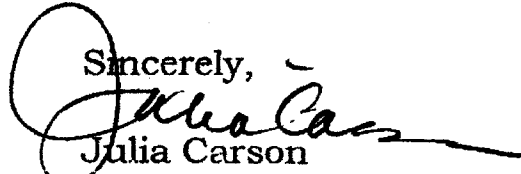
Since I last wrote about I-69 in August of last year, the economic picture for our nation and for our state—as for most states—has taken a dramatic turn for the worse, underscoring the importance of selecting a modest cost approach that will get the job done. Even as we experienced this trouble Indiana rejected a choice that would provide for the extended highway at the least cost in money, the least cost to the natural environment and the least cost to the human environment, the I-70/US 41 route.

I am committed to flexibility in the use of federal transportation funds to improve all forms of transportation investment for our future. I

would rather Indiana have useful highways, safe bridges *and* new passenger rail assets than a single highway as costly as the current proposals. In light of where we are today as a state and a nation, as well as the impacts your present alternatives threaten, the I-70/US 40 route should be selected in order that the transportation needs of all Indiana may be better addressed.

Thank you for your careful consideration of ways to help secure a better and more appropriate path for progress than the present destructive options.

Sincerely,



Julia Carson

Member of Congress

cc: Public Comment File

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