

[copy of letter sent by Senator Lugar to INDOT]

October 23, 2002

Mr. J. Brian Nicol
Commissioner
Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
100 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Commissioner Nicol:

Since the beginning of the I-69 planning process, I have written public comments commending the importance of a Southwest Corridor Highway in Indiana. I have discussed this issue with successive Secretaries of Transportation as new national administrations have come into office.

During a public appearance in Mooresville in September, I was asked by members of the media to comment on a report that I-69 would be built along Mann Road in Decatur Township of Marion County, including an approximate one-mile stretch that is the western boundary of the Lugar family farm. I dismissed the report on the grounds that I had not been informed of such a location plan, and I expressed my doubt about its validity. Because of the obvious need for Federal Appropriations and necessary Congressional support to pay for Indiana highway projects, my Senate office routinely receives detailed information about even the most modest of anticipated plans and requests.

Even discounting my obvious duties as a United States Senator, as a landowner who would be called upon under Alternative 3, Option B1 to surrender land for an entire mile of new highway, I believe that courtesy and transparency dictate that I would be proactively informed of these plans. On this occasion, only my own investigation has brought discovery that Alternative 3, Option B1 (and perhaps additional options) proceeds along Mann Road and includes an area approximately 2000 feet from Mann Road into the Lugar Farm for approximately one mile—an area of approximately 200 to 240 acres.

With a highway project of this magnitude and consequence, I would hope that highway officials would go well beyond the requirements of the law in engaging and informing affected communities and landowners about potential routes. In fact, I believe that every farm owner and farm family affected by I-69 planning options should have ample notice of vulnerability from the planners or an appropriate branch of government while there is time for public comment and reasonable opportunity to change the plan. The public is best served by vigorous debate on these issues, and I will contribute my voice to those public deliberations.

My strong suggestion would be to eliminate all of the Mann Road options and

ideas.

The Lugar farm is a 604.5 acre family business incorporated as Lugar Stock Farm, Inc. and owned by the Richard G. Lugar, Thomas R. Lugar, and Anne Lugar Johnson families, the heirs of Marvin L. Lugar and Bertha Green Lugar Caldwell. Our family purchased the farm more than 70 years ago. I have managed the farm profitably since the death of my father, Marvin Lugar, in 1956. Our annual crop plan includes approximately 410 acres of corn and soybeans. The remaining acres are a classified forest of hardwood trees. I have supervised the foundation of more than 60 acres of new hardwood tree plantations since 1983 and with one of my sons have pruned thousands of black walnut trees, personally, each year. The Mann Road I-69 plan would destroy nearly all of these plantations where we have entertained the national convention of walnut tree growers and international forestry leaders.

Although our total farm size ranks in the upper 20% of the approximately 1.9 million farms in the United States, it is on the small side in terms of providing enough crop land and cash grain sales to remain a viable enterprise during the growing trend of concentration in American agriculture. Through excellent conservation practices, advanced farming practices, and skilled marketing, we have achieved exceptional results. We have enjoyed an average corn crop of 131 bushels per acre during years 1998-2001, but that average is dependent upon upland acres along Mann Road that do not suffer through threats of flood or soil erosion. Even in the midst of all of the weather and foreign trade challenges facing American agriculture, the Lugar family believes that farming is profitable and that our farm provides an unusually beautiful area in the growing urbanization of Decatur Township. As many environmental analysts have bemoaned the loss of green space near urban areas, we have been proud of the aesthetic contribution of our land. We have rejected without negotiation or discussion offers or suggestions that our family would wish to sell any portion of the farm for any purpose. Let me underline our position. We do not wish any part of the I-69 planning process to include any part of our farm, and we are hopeful that it will not occupy any part of the neighborhood of our farm.

Alternative 3, Option B1 would clearly destroy not only a profitable farm enterprise but a beautiful tract of land which will become increasingly rare in the urbanization of Decatur Township. I believe that this would be a tragic public policy and environmental error and this is why I pose the issue in such stark and unmistakable terms to help provide very public and timely debate.

Sincerely,

(signature)

Richard G. Lugar