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Joe Courtney

Congress of the United States

2nd District, Connecticut

June 23, 2008

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Governor M. Jodi Rell
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
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Dear Governor Rell:

Thank you for your call on Friday to discuss Route 11. It was, as always, a pleasure to discuss areas of mutual concern in eastern Connecticut.

In your call, you indicated that the State was interested in moving forward on preliminary engineering and work on the environmental mitigation plan for the extension of Route 11 prior to the completion and approval of the Record of Decision (ROD). In addition, you indicated that the State was seeking the release of \$4.4 million provided in the 2005 SAFETEA-LU law (PL 109-59) from the federal government, to which the State would contribute \$1 million in matching funds, to support this work.

After our discussion, I immediately sought more information about how this request could move forward. After discussing the issue with staff in the Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, it appears that it could be possible to secure the release the \$4.4 million before the completion and approval of the ROD. Should the State wish to delay the approval of the ROD and instead pursue the release of these funds to support work on the mitigation plan and preliminary design, the best course of action appears to be for the State Department of Transportation to make that request in writing to the Federal Highway Administration.

I hope that if these funds are released, the State will use it as an opportunity to make long-awaited progress on developing an environmental mitigation plan that will address not only the Federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) publicly stated concerns with the project, but also overcome the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's objection to the plan and eventual permitting for it. In addition, it presents a chance for ConnDOT to further refine the route and a craft more detailed cost estimate for the extension of Route 11 – a key element that will help the State better identify funding needs and mechanisms for the project.

I remain committed to continuing to working with you, the state and federal agencies involved, and local stakeholders to move Route 11 forward. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I or my office can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress