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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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March 16, 2007

Mr. Pete Rahn
Director
Missouri Department of Transportation
105 West Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Mr. Rahn:

With construction for the Interstate 64 Rebuild about to commence, I am seeking assurance that all prudent steps to minimize traffic delays and business disruption will have been identified and implemented before any lanes on I-64 are closed.

Let me hasten to say that I concur with the decision to rebuild I-64 from Spoede Road to Kingshighway. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) has abundantly documented the advanced state of deterioration that afflicts most of the overpasses in the rebuild footprint, and also has shown that the roadbed and pavement for this section of Interstate has far exceeded its design life. Rebuilding in concert with major design improvements certainly is a prudent decision that also will prove to be cost effective.

Further, I understand the reasons behind MoDOT's decision to utilize a "design-build" methodology and its selection of the project plan submitted by Gateway Contractors. The purpose of this letter is not to argue against these decisions.

MoDOT and Gateway Constructors have conducted a number of briefings for elected officials as well as for the general public and have willingly answered any questions I or my staff have posed. Nevertheless, because constituents of the Second Congressional District will comprise a significant portion of those whose travels and business ventures will be directly affected by the rebuild, I am anxious to do all that I can to promote their safety and to minimize their loss of time, opportunity and business.

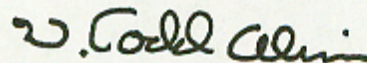
Indeed, it is precisely because so much is riding on the successful promulgation of the I-64 Rebuild that I feel compelled to explore in detail several aspects of the preparations. The issues below are those which need to be specifically addressed prior to the closure of all lanes on I-64:

1. Mr. Garry W. Earls, P.E., Director of Public Works for St. Louis County, has detailed the County's efforts to modify portions of substitute corridors such as Clayton Road to handle higher volumes of vehicle traffic more efficiently. I would appreciate hearing:
 - a) if this project will be completed before traffic is diverted from I-64 in January, 2008;
 - b) if the County will be able to sequence traffic lights for the morning and evening drive times; and
 - c) if similar action is taking place on other east-west or north-south thoroughfares within the jurisdiction of the County, the City of St. Louis or other affected municipalities.

2. Mention also has been made that MoDOT or other entities may be coordinating with Bi-State Development Agency (METRO) to establish additional temporary park-and-ride lots. Such lots allegedly would help facilitate higher express bus ridership during the two-year period when portions of I-64 will be closed and would help reduce the number of autos traveling between West St. Louis County and destinations near or east of the I-64 construction zone. I would appreciate hearing about MoDOT's role in such coordination.
3. Communication with the traveling public, and public awareness of proposed or actual changes in available routes, likely will have an enormous effect on how smoothly regional citizens adapt to the changes they will experience. MoDOT and Gateway Constructors have been appropriately proactive in conducting public meetings, issuing press releases, and posting changes to the New I-64 website. I would appreciate hearing how information pertaining to changes being made to regional roadways that are under the jurisdiction of St. Louis County, the City of St. Louis and other municipalities is being captured and disseminated.
4. Communication is not a one-way street. Travelers likely will have helpful suggestions for making further improvements as they prepare for announced changes to be implemented and as they begin driving new routes. I am interested in hearing what mechanisms St. Louis County, the City of St. Louis, and other municipalities anticipate fielding to gather comments and suggestions from travelers. I also am interested in hearing of any plans MoDOT may have to pass suggestions that are posted erroneously to the MoDOT or I-64 Rebuild websites through to the appropriate jurisdictions for action.
5. Best business practices often include pilot programs and product tests. Consequently, I am proposing that MoDOT consider coordinating with St. Louis City and County and other affected municipalities to conduct a trial run of the I-64 shut-down in mid- to late October (or a date determined by the key reconstruction participants) to test the traffic diversion plan and to identify any additional measures that should be implemented.

Your interest in the I-64 Rebuild and your tireless efforts over the past few years to make it a reality are commendable. I am looking forward to learning the full extent of your work to promote this project.

Sincerely,



W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Matt Blunt, Governor, State of Missouri
The Honorable Charlie A. Dooley, County Executive, St. Louis County
The Honorable Steve Ehlmann, County Executive, St. Charles County
The Honorable Francis G. Slay, Mayor, City of St. Louis