



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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August 26, 2011

The Honorable Arthur J. Wilhelmi
State Senator – 43rd Legislative District
2200 Weber Road
Crest Hill, Illinois 60403

Dear Senator Wilhelmi:

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) would like to thank you for your interest in freight issues and the work you've begun regarding the proposed Illinois Transportation District Authority Act. The draft is a good starting point for addressing freight needs in the region and innovative financing mechanisms to improve our freight infrastructure. In general, CMAP believes a broader approach as outlined in the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan would fully encompass the issues you seek to address in the draft legislation. We would like to discuss other potential strategies with you in more detail as you work with your colleagues in the Illinois General Assembly to introduce legislation.

GO TO 2040 was unanimously adopted by leaders of metropolitan Chicago's seven counties in October 2010, and it provides several recommendations to address freight-related issues. Specifically, it calls for the exploration of a self-financed regional freight authority, preferably within an existing agency, that provides coordinated oversight and governance regarding freight investments in the seven county region. This authority is needed to help identify issues, guide investments, and advocate on behalf of the region. In its oversight capacity, the proposed body would have the authority to collect revenue (such as user fees or tolls) and issue bonds. The authority's oversight responsibilities would include all freight modes, as well as freight-related economic development opportunities within the region. We recommend that you continue to reach out to stakeholders to explore the potential for establishing a more regional approach.

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Executive Director

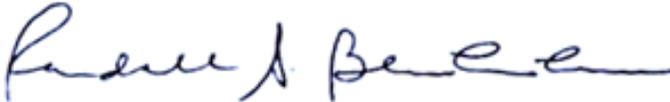
Randy Blankenhorn

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Thank you for including CMAP in the discussion, and we look forward to working with you to address this very important regional issue. I am requesting an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the recommendations outlined above and the draft legislation. My staff will contact your offices to schedule an appointment, but if you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at (312) 386-8600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall S. Blankenhorn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Randall S. Blankenhorn
Executive Director

RSB/jls