

CC

Senate Economic Development Committee

Testimony in Support of SB 410 and SB 411

June 15, 2011

My name is Eric DeLong, Deputy City Manager of Grand Rapids and I am here on behalf of the City to testify in favor of SB 410 and SB 411 and the New International Trade Crossing.

There are critical reasons to support this transformative investment:

- First, 50% of West Michigan's top 20 employers are key players in the export/import market. This emphasis ranges from manufacturers to major retailers. Two of Grand Rapids top 10 tax payers are import/export driven
- Second, we make things in Michigan and do it very well. In a world economy where success will be driven more by the ability to produce products than consume them, Michigan is well positioned to benefit from this resurgence in adding value – but this will only happen if we can get the goods to an international market or get the materials here to add value for end use.
- Third, Grand Rapids' success is based in large part on its ability to envision and execute public/private partnerships. Our economic expansion had been built on our ability to identify joint interests and work to meet them. We are now transferring that skill to public/public partnerships. The proposed New International Trade Crossing is just such a public/private partnership that involves two governments and a private operator partner. This critical partnership would serve the joint interests of the two governmental parties by assuring that commerce can continue and expand.
- Fourth, serving the joint interests of the two governments serves the interests of Michigan residents by infusing \$500 million of new, non-Michigan, money into the USDOT funding cycle to leverage \$2.2 billion of federal funds. We have no hope of securing even a fraction of that amount using current plans. All current plans only shift current money around by taking it from already underfunded outcomes and applying it to transportation. This investment would leverage \$2.2 billion worth of traditional construction jobs on Michigan roads and highways plus the jobs created by the New International Trade Crossing. It is the first key step in solving statewide transportation problem will otherwise cripple our recovery.
- Fifth, we should deal with honorable partners that share joint interests to guarantee our State's economic future.

Proceeding with the New International Trade Crossing is a three way winner: long term jobs; critical investment in roads across Michigan to preserve essential infrastructure; and, a vibrant export based economy.

We support SB 410 and SB 411 and the positive impact the New International Trade Crossing will have on Michigan, its communities and its people.