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July 29, 2020

The Honorable Ed Thompson
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Representative Thompson:

Thank you for your June 15, 2020, letter regarding the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) staff understands the magnitude and importance of this project to the local community, the Houston region, and the state of Texas. As you acknowledge in your letter, the high visibility of large projects such as the NHHIP garners many opinions and competing interests. Throughout the extensive NHHIP project development and public involvement process, TxDOT has actively sought out and listened to these opinions.

We have been working diligently for over a decade on the NHHIP, and we are committed to finding win-win solutions by addressing as many public concerns as possible without undermining the stated goals and purposes of the project. More specifically, TxDOT has spent the better course of the past four years evaluating the physical, cultural, and human environments affected by the proposed project. All of this is expected to be reflected in the forthcoming Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), as well as certain project specifics identified in your letter. Even though the FEIS includes the word “final” in its name, the environmental clearance for the project is by no means the end of efforts to refine the project. There is still a considerable amount of work to be done before the NHHIP is finalized.

The FEIS, and the subsequent record of decision (ROD), are critical stage gates in the environmental clearance process. The ROD is a necessary step in moving into the detailed design phases of project development, which is where we will have the opportunity to further explore and refine mitigation measures. Following the ROD, we will have options available to refine the project, and we are committed to judiciously identifying win-win opportunities to make the project reflect our collective best efforts.

Again, thank you for your letter of appreciation to the agency and its employees. All perspectives and points-of-view are welcome and requested because they help TxDOT achieve and maintain the best transportation system in the country.

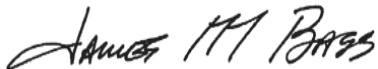
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If you have any questions, please contact me at (512) 305-9515. If your staff needs additional information, they may contact Raquelle Lewis, Public Involvement Officer Section Director at (713) 802-5071 or via email at Raquelle.Lewis@txdot.gov.

Sincerely,



James M. Bass
Executive Director

cc: Senator Robert Nichols, Senate District 3
Senator Paul Bettencourt, Senate District 7
Senator Larry Taylor, Senate District 11
Representative Cecil Bell, Jr., House District 3
Representative Steve Toth, House District 15
Representative Will Metcalf, House District 16
Representative Mayes Middleton, House District 23
Representative Rick Miller, House District 26
Representative Gary Gates, House District 28
Representative Sam Harless, House District 126
Representative Dan Huberty, House District 127
Representative Briscoe Cain, House District 128
Representative Dennis Paul, House District 129
Representative Tom Oliverson, House District 130
Representative Jim Murphy, House District 133
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