



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Jim Doyle
Governor

Frank J. Busalacchi
Secretary

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April 1, 2005

Becky Abel, Executive Director
Wisconsin Wetlands Association
222 S. Hamilton Street
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Ms. Abel:

The Governor has asked that I respond to your letter dated March 7, outlining your concerns about the West Bend state highway 33 and airport project. I want to take this opportunity to provide a few points of clarification.

In our effort to fully review and assess the environmental concerns relative to this project, we have actively involved the public, local government, state government, federal government and others in this process. We have worked diligently and exhaustively to explore alternatives and options. After years of assessing the environmental impact, readdressing and updating the purpose and need, and reviewing mitigation concerns, we have concluded that we now have a plan that agencies can work with. Additionally, while not required for this environmental assessment, our agency has provided a detailed benefit/cost analysis to assure that state and federal transportation trust funds proposed for the combined highway and airport project were judiciously and properly applied.

We recognize that this is a sizable wetland project, however, we are eager to properly mitigate this by returning more wetland areas back to the area than what is taken. We are poised and committed to work with the state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and local groups to assure the proper mitigation for this project. We also have taken into account that this project could challenge water quality and water flow relative to storm water run off if not addressed properly. We plan to address, respect and protect the regional investments made in the flood and sewage control infrastructure. Our intention is not to cause water problems to the immediate area or downstream communities, but rather enhance and possibly further improve the structure.

Our intention has and continues to be to assure that all environmental regulations are adhered to and that the end result is a stronger environment. We have made every effort to do this in all phases of project planning and review.

The final draft Environmental Assessment (EA) that contains the detailed studies conducted over the last few years as well as information included in the preliminary EA has been sent for final review to DNR, Army Corps of Engineers and US Environmental

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Protection Agency. Once the review period is over, the Department of Transportation will then send the document to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for their review and make the final determination relative to a Finding of No Significant Impact or whether they will institute an Environmental Impact Study.

Whatever the outcome, I am confident that we will be able to partner and work together with all agencies and parties concerned to conduct a project that will be to the benefit of all while being good stewards environmentally and fiscally.

Thank you for communicating your concerns.

Sincerely,



Frank J. Busalacchi
Secretary

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