

RON KIND
THIRD DISTRICT, WISCONSIN
SENIOR WHIP

1406 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5506 FAX: (202) 225-5739
TTY: (202) 226-1772

WEBSITE: www.kind.house.gov

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

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
FOREST, AND PUBLIC LANDS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE,
AND OCEANS

February 2, 2011

Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

As your administration reviews the urgent transportation needs of our state, I write requesting that you immediately address the future of the Stillwater Lift Bridge and the St. Croix River Crossing Project. The 80 year-old Stillwater Lift Bridge is functionally deficient, in need of substantial investment to simply maintain its operation, is the site of substantial congestion and safety hazards, and limits the ability of the region to attract jobs and tourism.

In October 2010, the National Park Service found that even with mitigation efforts, the construction of a new bridge would impact the scenic and recreational value of the St. Croix River. Given the unique history of this project, the inadequacy of the existing infrastructure, and the extraordinary effort that has been made to accommodate the historic preservation and environmental concerns surrounding this project, I am hopeful that Congress can work together in a bipartisan way to allow the St. Croix River Crossing Project to move forward while maintaining the integrity of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Western Wisconsin is in dire need of real long-term transportation solutions. High speed rail would have provided a viable alternate mode of transportation to travel into the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area and help ease the congestion on both the Stillwater Bridge and Interstate 94. Since the state has refused federal funding to extend high speed rail from Milwaukee to Minneapolis, it is absolutely vital that your administration puts forward a realistic transportation plan that addresses our aging infrastructure and increasing congestion.

Letters of support from the Governors of both Wisconsin and Minnesota that outline the need for the project and the commitment to maintain the environmental mitigation efforts envisioned in the St. Croix River Crossing Project are essential to help smooth the way for Congressional passage. I therefore urge you to provide a letter affirming your Administration's support for the St. Croix River Crossing Project.

Business leaders throughout the state have made it clear that if we want Wisconsin to be open to business, we must be willing to make investments in our transportation system. Today, the Stillwater Lift Bridge experiences a crash rate that is twice the statewide level and, without a new bridge, congestion is expected to double over the next 20 years. I strongly believe that this project would jumpstart business creation in northwestern Wisconsin and reduce the costs that congestion imposes on residents, commuters, infrastructure, the local economy, and the environment.

LA CROSSE OFFICE
205 5TH AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 400
LA CROSSE, WI 54601
(608) 782-2558 FAX: (608) 782-4588
TTY: (608) 782-1173

DISTRICT TOLL FREE NUMBER

1-888-442-8040

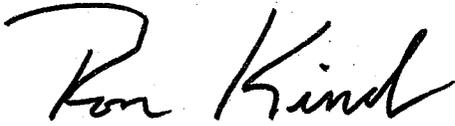
TTY: 1-888-880-9180

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

EAU CLAIRE OFFICE
131 SOUTH BARSTOW STREET, SUITE 301
EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701
(715) 831-9214 FAX: (715) 831-9272

I look forward to your timely response on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Kind". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and "K".

Ron Kind

Member of Congress

RK:kw