



MPC Statement

Re: Transportation Infrastructure Hearings

April 16, 2009

Good evening. My name is Peter Skosey and I am Vice President of the Metropolitan Planning Council. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before the committee today.

Transportation infrastructure in Illinois is sorely underfunded. Crumbling bridges, deteriorating roads, and aging public transit brings our statewide overall surface transportation needs to an estimated \$13 billion over the next 5 years. The \$3.8 billion proposed in the Governor's capital program and the \$1.4 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) doesn't even cover half of the state's pressing transportation infrastructure needs.

Recognizing limited funding sources and a weakened economy, MPC believes that it is important to make smart spending choices with limited transportation dollars to encourage *investments* in our transportation infrastructure instead of *expenditures*.

Ill. Rep Kathy Ryg (D-Vernon Hills) is sponsoring HB2359 which would fundamentally change how the state selects transportation projects. Our current system is flawed and doesn't provide an objective ranking system to fund projects based on merit, connectivity to regional benefits, or their ability to achieve our state's goals. HB2359 addresses these concerns and allows for a transparent, accountable system that can show the people of Illinois what benefits they will receive because of investment in a particular project.

Does it reduce congestion and improve our air quality? Does it create jobs and bring economic development to my community? Will it promote housing near jobs? We can't answer these questions of our transportation expenditures today. But HB2359 allows for all of our state's surface transportation projects to be evaluated and measured so that we can ensure that our limited dollars are being invested wisely. We believe that the transportation system needs necessary policy reforms to unleash the growth potential of regions through coordinated planning and transparency in capital expenditures.

Illinois needs to fundamentally change the way it funds transportation projects. Establishing an accountable and transparent system for deciding how our limited transportation dollars are spent will provide the residents and businesses of this state with a process for making smart investment decisions that yield a measurable return. These reforms are critical to building a sustainable and competitive Illinois.

Thank you,

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