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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**STEPHANIE CHANG**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

February 23, 2016

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, Commandant  
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters  
Stop 7418  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue  
Washington, DC 20593-7418

RE: Public Notice 09-01-16, Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project

Dear Commandant Zukunft,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments regarding the proposed Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project (ABEP) permit. Since January 2015, I have had the wonderful honor of serving Michigan's House District 6, which includes part of Southwest Detroit and the host community for the current Ambassador Bridge. I urge the Coast Guard not to move forward on the proposed permit for a second private span unless two conditions are met:

- (1) The Detroit International Bridge Company (DIBC) has written documentation regarding approval by the National Park Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to use Riverside Park land for non-recreation purposes; and,
- (2) A full Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is conducted and results in a finding of no significant impact.

Southwest Detroit is a diverse region of the city with many vibrant neighborhoods but its fair share of economic, public health and environmental justice issues. The community has large - African-American and Latino populations and is known as an environmental justice community. Southwest Detroit has a large number of children and a high rate of poverty (37 percent of households). More than half of the children overall, and children less than 6 years of age in Southwest Detroit, lived in poverty in 2010.<sup>1</sup> There are multiple sources of pollution in Southwest Detroit and surrounding communities, including the Marathon Oil Refinery, DTE Energy's coal plant, Zug Island, the Waste Water Treatment Plant, AK Steel, Great Lakes Steel and truck traffic

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<sup>11</sup> <http://datadrivendetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/SW-Detroit-Neighborhoods.pdf>

to and from the Ambassador Bridge. Southwest Detroit is part of the broader region in Wayne County that is currently out of compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for sulfur dioxide. The ZIP code 48216, where the Ambassador Bridge is located, has one of the highest rates of persistent asthma for children covered by Medicaid.<sup>2</sup> Many residents have expressed their concerns to me about the impact a second private span would have on air quality in the residential neighborhood.

Below are the main concerns I have with the Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project permit:

**A. The Bridge Company does not have the land they need in Detroit to build a second private span.**

As noted in the public comments submitted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)<sup>3</sup>, millions of dollars from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund have been spent in the past three decades to improve Riverside Park. In 1976, DNR awarded the city \$807,176 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire 10 acres and develop parking, roads, the boat launch, comfort stations, athletic fields and other amenities.<sup>4</sup> In 1997, DNR awarded the city \$500,000 from the Natural Resources Trust Fund for renovations of the seawall, railings and promenade.<sup>5</sup> In 2010, DNR awarded the city two grants of \$104,000 and \$50,000 for piers, dredging, parking control, a roof and fencing.<sup>6</sup>

In order for the Detroit International Bridge Company to build a new bridge using the portion of Riverside Park they have a certain level of approval from the city to lease, they would have to gain approval by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the United States National Park Service. Because funds were used from the Natural Resources Trust Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund to renovate Riverside Park, the land is only to be used for public outdoor recreation unless a land conversion is approved.

Section 6(f)(3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act states that: “No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversions only if he/she finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.”

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<sup>2</sup> Wasilevich EA, Lyon-Callo S, Rafferty A, Dombkowski K. “Detroit – The Epicenter of Asthma Burden.” *Epidemiology of Asthma in Michigan*. Bureau of Epidemiology, MI Department of Community Health, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Dated January 29, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Michigan Department of Natural Resources letter to Mayor Mike Duggan, dated May 5, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

As of this writing, the City of Detroit has not submitted any application for a land conversion for Riverside Park.

Furthermore, DNR stated in its letter to the Coast Guard that it is “**not likely to approve** the conversion of dedicated park land in exchange for a site that contains both a warehouse and a parking lot, because the warehouse site does not offer equivalent recreational value (emphasis added).”<sup>7</sup>

I would like to respectfully request that the Coast Guard not make a final decision regarding the ABEP permit until there is approval from DNR and the National Park Service for the Riverside Park land conversion. It simply is not logical to approve a permit to build a bridge when the DIBC does not even have approval to use the land it needs in order to build such a bridge.

**B. The environmental assessment for the ABEP and the proposed Finding of No Significant Impact is incorrect, because it is based on outdated data, wrong assumptions, and procedural errors. In addition, a long-term transportation project of this magnitude and with close proximity to residential neighborhoods, schools and parks deserves a full Environmental Impact Study (EIS).**

There are a number of concerns that I and others in the community have regarding the 2007 environmental assessment and the December 2015 re-evaluation. First, the environmental assessment segments this border project and only analyzes the potential environmental impact of a six-lane bridge. The reality is that the overall project includes 10 lanes of bridge traffic including the current and proposed private spans, the Gateway Project, and renovations and remediation at Riverside Park.

Of great concern is the fact that the environmental assessment is based on very outdated data. The 2010 modeling results that compare air pollutant emission projections to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are based on 2007 report.<sup>8</sup> The forecasted truck traffic in the environmental assessment is based on a 2005 travel demand forecast for the old DRIC study. The 2012 Air Quality Addendum references meteorological databases from 2001-2005. Using data that is, in some cases, a decade-and-a-half old simply does not accurately assess the environmental impact of a future second private span. If the Coast Guard is considering approving a permit for a large international bridge that would land near a residential neighborhood already greatly affected by air pollution from multiple sources, it seems clearly appropriate that an environmental assessment would use data as current as possible. Last fall, when the Coast Guard asked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review the assessment, the EPA responded

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<sup>7</sup> MDOT public comment on ABEP submitted to U.S. Coast Guard, dated January 29, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> United States Coast Guard. “Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project Reevaluation – Environmental Assessment.” December 29, 2015. Page 3-4.

by recommending that the travel forecasts and air quality data be updated to be more current.<sup>9</sup> However, this has not taken place.

The re-evaluation of the environmental assessment assumes that a certain percentage of trucks are using new diesel engines and therefore must be polluting less, citing the Health Effects Institute study that showed that “new-technology diesel exhaust” emitted particulate matter and toxic air pollutants 90 percent lower than emissions from older diesel engines.<sup>10</sup> The re-evaluation of the environmental assessment notes that one-third of commercial trucks currently use newer engines that have reduced emissions.<sup>11</sup> This certainly sounds promising; however, this assumption is based on a national study, not localized data. The re-evaluation does not indicate the percentage of trucks in the Midwest, Michigan, the Detroit area, or specifically at the Windsor-Detroit border that use new diesel engines vs. older engines. I believe a full environmental impact study should be done that would instead be based on actual data regarding the percentage of trucks crossing the Windsor-Detroit border that have new diesel engines, or at the very least, Michigan or Midwestern data.

I am quite concerned about the procedures that were used in the environmental assessment. In its response to the Coast Guard last fall, the EPA recommended that the DIBC use MOVES2014 mobile source emissions modeling to update the air quality emissions projections.”<sup>12</sup> The MDOT public comment submitted to the Coast Guard also points out that the EPA made this recommendation and that the environmental assessment remains based on the outdated MOBILE6.2 modeling software.<sup>13</sup> In addition, a new mobile hotspot analysis is needed. Even if updated data were used, and each pollutant’s emissions were under the NAAQS limits, hotspot analyses would help to ensure that certain neighborhoods or residents are not bearing too heavy a burden of air pollution. Given the hazards of particulate matter to our health, a hotspot analysis would help us determine whether emissions are at levels safe for individuals with higher risk of health problems.

I would like to remind the Coast Guard that a binational study between Canada and the U.S. ranked the concept of a second private Ambassador Bridge as one of the worst possible options, primarily due to its environmental impact on the local neighborhoods.

Given all of the problems with the environmental assessment and its re-evaluation, I respectfully urge the Coast Guard to conduct a full environmental impact study. Any increase in emissions of pollutants related to diesel exhaust or sulfur dioxide, for which our region is still in

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<sup>9</sup> United States Coast Guard. “Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project Reevaluation – Environmental Assessment.” December 29, 2015. Page 3-8.

<sup>10</sup> United States Coast Guard. “Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project Reevaluation – Environmental Assessment.” December 29, 2015. Page 3-7.

<sup>11</sup> United States Coast Guard. “Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project Reevaluation – Environmental Assessment.” December 29, 2015. Page 3-8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> MDOT public comment submitted to U.S. Coast Guard, dated February 1, 2016.

non-compliance, is unacceptable, and we need to use the most current data available and use the current EPA-recommended modeling software.

**C. A second Ambassador Bridge private span would put the public health of our residents at risk, in a set of neighborhoods that are already heavily polluted.**

If the Ambassador Bridge second span permit is approved, the truck traffic and resulting air quality would have a significant negative impact on public health in Southwest Detroit. The stretch of bridge between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, is the busiest international crossing for commercial vehicles, with nearly 13,000 trucks every day.<sup>14</sup> When trucks are crossing, idling, and queuing up before the bridge, they produce diesel exhaust emissions.

As noted above, Wayne County is currently not in compliance with the Clean Air Act because we failed to meet the sulfur dioxide limits. This designation status came in July 2013. It is extremely concerning that the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality still has not submitted a state implementation plan for sulfur dioxide to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) although it is nearly one year overdue. Also, while we do have air monitors in and around Southwest Detroit, we do not have adequate monitoring for some substances like nitrogen oxide, benzene, hydrocarbons, and particulate matter — all substances associated with diesel emissions. Diesel exhaust emissions make up about 20 percent of PM<sub>2.5</sub> at Detroit air monitors.<sup>15</sup> Diesel exhaust is a mixture of different pollutant substances — so there is not a clear air quality standard. Particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is a major concern in Southwest Detroit, and the World Health Organization has classified diesel emissions as carcinogenic.<sup>16</sup> If we do not have adequate monitoring, we cannot know the full extent of the impact our air quality is having on the health of seniors, children, and families in Southwest Detroit.

It is a well-known fact that asthma hospitalization rates in Detroit are over three times higher than the rates in Michigan as a whole.<sup>17</sup> This situation is even more concerning for the children of Southwest Detroit because children's lungs are still developing, so they are more susceptible to the effects of diesel emissions. Every year in Detroit, there are an estimated 280 deaths and 380 heart attacks due to diesel emissions exposure.<sup>18</sup> Emissions from mobile sources, especially diesel, contribute to particulate matter in the air.<sup>19</sup> An increasingly large body of

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<sup>14</sup> Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, SEMCOG Information, *The Ambassador Bridge*, [www.semcoq.org/WorkArea/downloadasset.aspx?id=5369](http://www.semcoq.org/WorkArea/downloadasset.aspx?id=5369)

<sup>15</sup> Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. *Your Child's Environmental Health: How the Body Works: Differences Between Adults and Children*. [https://michigan.gov/documents/ATSDRChildrensHealthhandoutsFS\\_155917\\_7.pdf](https://michigan.gov/documents/ATSDRChildrensHealthhandoutsFS_155917_7.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> McNeil Jr., Donald. "WHO Declares Diesel Fumes Cause Lung Cancer." *New York Times*. June 12, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/13/health/diesel-fumes-cause-lung-cancer-who-says.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/13/health/diesel-fumes-cause-lung-cancer-who-says.html?_r=0)

<sup>17</sup> Wasilevich EA, Lyon-Callo S, Rafferty A, Dombkowski K. "Detroit – The Epicenter of Asthma Burden." *Epidemiology of Asthma in Michigan*. Bureau of Epidemiology, MI Department of Community Health, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> *Clean Air Task Force. Diesel and Health in America, the Lingering Threat*. Boston, MA. [www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/Diesel\\_Health\\_in\\_America.pdf](http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/Diesel_Health_in_America.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. *Your Child's Environmental Health: How the Body Works: Differences Between Adults and Children*. [https://michigan.gov/documents/ATSDRChildrensHealthhandoutsFS\\_15597\\_7.pdf](https://michigan.gov/documents/ATSDRChildrensHealthhandoutsFS_15597_7.pdf)

evidence indicates that traffic-related exposures and residential proximity to vehicular traffic<sup>20</sup> are associated with increased respiratory conditions and symptoms in children, including asthma<sup>21</sup>, wheezing, recurrent respiratory illnesses<sup>22</sup> and hospital admissions for asthma.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. George Thurston from the New York School of Medicine said: “I therefore conclude that any added fine particle exposures to the public from the proposed additional span at the Ambassador Bridge, if approved and built, will indeed have both acute and chronic adverse effects on the public health of persons living or working in communities in the vicinity of the bridge in Detroit as well as across the river in Windsor.”<sup>24</sup>

**D. The soil at Riverside Park is contaminated and would require extensive remediation near the Detroit River before any construction of a second private span.**

In addition to the serious issues with the land conversion needed at Riverside Park before building a second private span, there are also critical problems with the soil along the river. Last summer, MDEQ submitted a response to DTE Energy regarding their surveying activities and plans for remediation activities at Riverside Park, and also noted that their contractors have observed an illegal installation of “large diameter utilities” on one of the park parcels.<sup>25</sup> In addition, MDEQ collected sediment samples at Riverside Park in November 2015. After initial analysis and observations at the park, MDEQ said “both the USEPA and DEQ believe environmental contamination is present at multiple points along the riverfront portion of the Riverside Park site.”<sup>26</sup> MDEQ expects to release a modeling report from MDEQ about this contamination and its potential risks to human health in March.

**E. Cumulative impact needs to be studied in Southwest Detroit as the second private span permit is being considered. The environmental assessment was conducted prior to the progress with the Gordie Howe International Bridge and the expansion of the Marathon refinery.**

At the time the environmental assessment was completed, the DRIC (now Gordie Howe International Bridge) had not gotten underway, and the Marathon refinery expansion had not taken place yet. The environmental assessment stated that “it is speculative as to whether the refinery will be expanded ... it is not reasonably foreseeable at this time what the expansion will

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<sup>20</sup> Clear Air Task Force. 2007. “No escape from diesel exhaust: how to reduce commuter exposure.” [http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/No\\_Escape\\_from\\_Diesel\\_Exhaust.pdf](http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/No_Escape_from_Diesel_Exhaust.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www3.epa.gov/region1/eco/airtox/diesel.html>

<sup>22</sup> Clear Air Task Force. 2007. “No escape from diesel exhaust: how to reduce commuter exposure.” [http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/No\\_Escape\\_from\\_Diesel\\_Exhaust.pdf](http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/No_Escape_from_Diesel_Exhaust.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). 2014. *Integrated science assessment for particulate matter, health criteria, final report.* <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=216546#Download>

<sup>24</sup> Comments to US Coast Guard regarding draft environmental assessment, submitted by Christopher M. Bzdok, Olson, Bzdok, & Howard, dated August 30, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> <http://wdet.org/posts/2015/07/13/80991-detroits-riverside-park-vote/>

<sup>26</sup> Email from Joshua Scheels, MDEQ remediation and redevelopment division, to Representative Chang, dated January 7, 2016.

entail and what impacts may be involved. Therefore, a cumulative analysis is not required for this potential project.”<sup>27</sup>

The Marathon refinery expansion took place in 2012, and the refinery operations now include the processing of tar sands. The Gordie Howe International Bridge is making significant progress. Last month, the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority announced the three groups of bidders that have been selected,<sup>28</sup> and the request for proposals is expected to be issued soon. The Michigan Department of Transportation’s property acquisitions in Delray are underway, including the relocation of Delray residents. I am honored to be part of the Community Advisory Group that is working with and for residents and business owners in Delray and Southwest Detroit to advocate for community benefits.

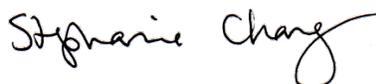
Given the fact that the refinery expansion has taken place and that we have updated information about the Gordie Howe International Bridge, I believe a cumulative impact study is not only reasonable, but needed in order to accurately assess the environmental impact of a proposed second private span in addition to all the other major polluting sources in Southwest Detroit with the Gordie Howe International Bridge and Marathon expansion included.

To close, I would like to reiterate my request that the Coast Guard not move forward on the proposed permit for a second private span unless two conditions are met:

- (1) The Detroit International Bridge Company has written documentation regarding approval by the National Park Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to use Riverside Park land for non-recreation purposes, and,
- (2) A full Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is conducted and results in a finding of no significant impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project. I look forward to the public hearing on Thursday, Feb. 25. Please feel free to contact me at (517) 373-0823 or [stephaniechang@house.mi.gov](mailto:stephaniechang@house.mi.gov) with any questions.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Chang  
State Representative, House District 6  
Detroit, River Rouge, and Ecorse

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<sup>27</sup> Detroit International Bridge Company. *Final Environmental Assessment – Ambassador Bridge Enhancement Project*. Section XI. “Secondary and Cumulative Impacts”. January 2009.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.freep.com/story/money/business/michigan/2016/01/20/windsor-detroit-bridge-gordie-howe/79073886/>