



The Alliance for I-69 Texas

Encouraging Cooperation and Seeking Solutions Since 1994

January 30, 2009

Dear Dr. Michael Walton,
Chair, 2030 Committee 2009

As the Chairman of the Board of the Alliance for I-69 Texas, I want to congratulate you and the 2030 Committee for your excellent report and for your work on behalf of the State of Texas in accessing our long term transportation needs.

The Alliance for I-69 Texas is a non-profit organization made up of local governments, economic development groups, port authorities and private associate members. Our organization has actively served as an advocate for the construction of an interstate highway in Texas from Texarkana to the Texas Gulf Ports to the lower Rio Grande Valley and Laredo by upgrading existing highways where possible.

The 2030 Committee report highlights the congestion problems that the state currently faces in its metropolitan areas that will only become worse in the future without significant investment. We believe it is also important that these investments be made in connectivity between our metropolitan areas and trade and freight generators like ports, inland ports and international border crossings.

The I-69 Corridor Advisory Committee issued a "Citizens Report on the Current and Future Needs of the I-69 Corridor" in December of last year, which found that the forecast for international trade and freight involvement along the Texas-Mexico border, Texas Gulf Coast and through East Texas is indisputably on the rise. They found that Texas is the nation's leading maritime state, with exponential growth projected. Texas has more than 1,000 freight handling facilities located in its 16 major seaports on the 1,000 miles of ship channels along or adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico. In recent years, Texas ports have handled approximately 25% of all cargo tonnage traded at U.S. ports. The impact of Texas ports on the state's economy and job creation is staggering. For example, the Port of Houston, Texas' largest port, contributed nearly \$118 billion to the state's economy, impacting over 785,000 Texas jobs in 2006.



The Alliance for I-69 Texas

Encouraging Cooperation and Seeking Solutions Since 1994

Texas ports significantly impact the national economy. The ports of Houston, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Freeport and Texas City are among the top 25 U.S. ports in tonnage handled each year. These goods must get inland from the ports to their markets. I-69 will serve to move these goods to the people of Texas and beyond.

I-69 will also serve to meet the concern expressed in the 2030 report for the need to link rural areas to their markets. The I-69 route runs through portions of our state that have not enjoyed the population growth or economic development of our major metropolitan areas. It will serve as a catalyst for the development of these rural areas and spread job creation more evenly to regions where land is less expensive and which are in compliance with federal clean air standards.

Thank you for allowing us to address the important issues of connectivity that I-69 and other important corridors in Texas will address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John P. Thompson".

Judge John P. Thompson
Chairman