



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Kay Ivey
Governor



John R. Cooper
Transportation Director

January 10, 2022

The Honorable Sandy Stimpson
Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Honorable Jack Burrell
Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization

VIA EMAIL

Dear Chairman Burrell and Chairman Stimpson,

The Alabama Department of Transportation has received your letter sharing the framework for a solution to the traffic congestion problem crossing Mobile Bay that has been developed by the Eastern Shore MPO and Mobile MPO. We appreciate the framework and commend your leadership for developing this locally-supported solution.

I am tasking Edward N. Austin, our Chief Engineer, and Matt Ericksen, Southwest Region Engineer, with developing a detailed plan based on your framework. For the past several weeks, our personnel have been working to update the environmental document for the project as well as re-start the traffic and revenue studies necessary to support a detailed financing plan for the project. While much work remains to be completed, preliminary results are encouraging. We look forward to completion of this work and the project plan at the earliest possible date.

The plan to be developed from your framework will include the following key parameters:

- Rather than taking a piecemeal approach, we will recommend a plan that is comprehensive and should be completed in five years once construction begins. While this is a very short timeline for such a massive project, we agree with your assessment that a comprehensive solution must be

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developed now. This should include a new six-lane Mobile River bridge, a new Bayway built to current safety and longevity standards, and appropriate interchanges in Baldwin and Mobile Counties.

- The plan moving forward must include free, no toll options to cross Mobile Bay, including free use of the Causeway, the Africatown Bridge, and the Wallace and Bankhead tunnels.
- We anticipate a plan based on financial data and traffic counts to fund all new construction using at least \$250 million in state funding, \$125 million in federal funding and a toll that shall not exceed \$2.50 for passenger vehicles that choose to use the new infrastructure. We will continue to work with the MPOs on flat-rate tolling for frequent business and personal travel across the Bayway.
- Revenue from this project, as well as any new federal or state funding that may become available in the future for this project will be applied to pay off debt for this project only. All tolls will end when debt is paid.
- All new infrastructure will be owned by the state and this project will not include any private concessionaire.

In summary, from a state perspective, we support the framework that has been developed by the Eastern Shore MPO and Mobile MPO. Please notify your respective staffs that our team will be reaching out to them in the coming days to take the next steps to prepare a plan for your organizations to consider soon.

Sincerely,



John R. Cooper
Transportation Director