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August 21, 2012

The Honorable Victor M. Mendez
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Mendez,

I am writing with concern over the long-stalled Williamsville, New York Interstate 90 toll barrier relocation project. It is my understanding, from state and federal officials, that an environmental impact statement (EIS) has been pending for several years with no results. I respectfully request the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) expedite the conclusion of the EIS and release the results so New York State Thruway Authority officials can move forward.

In 2006, area residents believed this project would progress, and local leaders have been planning this move as far back as the late 1990s. I believe the public deserves certainty, and I am hopeful you will work with my office and local officials to provide an outcome regarding this project. Relocating the Williamsville toll barrier will help alleviate health and environmental risks posed to the public and relieve motorists and businesses of an unnecessary financial burden. The move is designed to take the exhaust generated from idling vehicles away from heavily populated suburbs. An EIS was requested to address these concerns, as well as to address the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) concerns over the potential impact on wetlands. To date, the EPA has not received any documents to review.

It is also my understanding that the Amherst, New York Town Board voted on August 20, 2012 to file a Freedom of Information Request that included a request for an accounting of federal funding allocated for this project. I support the board's request for transparency and ask that you provide my office with a full breakdown of the federal funding. It is imperative that the public know how its hard-earned tax dollars are being spent.

I strongly urge the Federal Highway Administration to conclude its environmental impact statement and release the results to the appropriate parties in order to advance this project. As this process moves forward, I pledge to work with all agencies involved to reach an outcome in the best interest of the community.

Sincerely,



Kathleen C. Hochul
Member of Congress