



February 7, 2007

Dear Member of the 95th General Assembly:

The spring of 2007 will be busy for Illinois policymakers as you consider how the state should best address many pressing issues. Education and healthcare funding have grabbed the headlines, and they are issues that have a significant impact on all of us. But for many in the business, organized labor, not-for-profit and local governmental communities, the need for investment in the state's transportation network is equally compelling.

Illinois lies at the nation's crossroads. This state boasts the fifth largest port in the world, with significant volumes of freight cargo moving in and out of the Chicago area every day. Illinois has the third largest Interstate highway network in the nation – taking commerce and families east and west, north and south across the country. And our transit systems – the commuter trains and bus lines in the Chicago metropolitan area, and the numerous downstate bus and paratransit services – are all in need of additional funding, as ridership numbers grow and the need for options that reduce highway congestion also grows.

Illinois' transportation network is perhaps our leading competitive edge in the global race for business investment and jobs. We cannot lose this edge, which is what will happen if we don't invest now, this year, in maintaining and improving our roads and highways, mass transit, rail and airports. If we don't act this spring, the past few years of *declining* investment in our transportation infrastructure will put out of reach the possibility of adequately maintaining and enhancing our highway, transit, rail and air infrastructure. What will that mean for us? Increasing congestion will further slow the movement of goods and people across Illinois. The basic infrastructure that we rely on to get to work, access healthcare, visit family and friends and buy the goods and services we need will fall into disrepair. The economy will suffer as businesses choose to invest in places where transportation is safe and efficient, a reality that has implications for our quality of life for years to come.

To demonstrate the severity of the situation, the Transportation for Illinois Coalition has prepared an analysis of the funding need and recommended investments to meet that need for Illinois' transportation network. Attached is a two-page document that summarizes that need. We hope you will take the time to read through the quick summary. In the weeks ahead, we will be following up with you to talk about what we have done, how we arrived at the funding need amounts, and how we hope to partner with you and your colleagues to develop a program that will address this need.

If you have any questions, or would like to talk with us, please feel free to call. You can reach our managing director, Jennifer Gordon, at: 217/572-1270 (work) or 217/414-5595 (cell). You may also contact one of us directly.

Sincerely,

Margaret Blackshere
TFIC co-chair
President, Illinois AFL-CIO

Doug Whitley
TFIC co-chair
President, Illinois Chamber of Commerce