



Metropolitan Milwaukee
Association of Commerce

August 10, 2009

The Honorable Patricia Jursik
County Supervisor, District 8
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Supervisor Jursik:

I appreciate your concerns voiced in the media regarding MMAC's position on the future of the Hoan Bridge. I am hopeful this written communication will put the facts in front of you.

However, I do find it a bit disturbing for an elected official to paint our organization and membership with a baseless conspiratorial brush, in your words "*there is a hidden assumption that the bridge should not be resurfaced and that other links would suffice.*" Really, based on what information?

We certainly respect your role in representing your constituents and as an elected County Board Supervisor. If at any time, on any issue, you have any questions regarding our views on public policy issues as we work to represent our membership that employs over 280,000 people in the metro area, please give me a call. My direct line is 414-287-4125. In addition, Peter Beitzel serves as our in-house expert on transportation issues. We will all be in a better place if we are dealing with the facts.

As it relates specifically to your assertion that MMAC is "*insulting residents of Milwaukee's south side and other south shore communities*", a few facts might help in resolving your concerns.

- A bit of history. In July of 1964, news reports noted that "*a high level bridge over the Milwaukee harbor--a dream for over 34 years--will finally become a reality with the announcement that Milwaukee County will receive 3.5 additional interstate miles*". That announcement was made July 2, in Washington by Luther Hodges, Secretary of Commerce. Why? Because "*granting the high level bridge for Milwaukee County culminated two years of concentrated effort by the Association both as a leader in attempts to get the bridge on the I system, and as a coordinator of other community efforts involving the bridge.*" Getting it on the Interstate System would mean the federal government would pay 90% of the construction costs--at the time a \$40M boost to the County. The Association had been pursuing this bridge since 1930, and became the prime mover to get this done. Kudos certainly go to Congressmen Zablocki, Ruess, Senators Proxmire and Nelson, and others in this effort.

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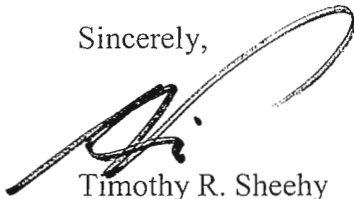
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- After a recent briefing on the state of the Hoan bridge, its needed repairs, its structural soundness, and the cost to repair and patch the existing bridge given to our members, significant employers on both the north and south sides of the bridge (to use your geography) they felt we should communicate to the Governor and the Department of Transportation the need to study the best options for both the short term and long term to REPLACE THE BRIDGE (as is or in another design). It is our understanding that the current bridge has a lifespan that might take it to 2030. However, it will need hundreds of millions in repair work before that. Part of what would be asked in any study is, does it make sense to reconstruct the bridge sooner and save the significant repair costs? MMAC has never suggested that we do not support a connection, a “bridge” over the harbor.

I am hopeful that this information will help you better understand our position regarding a bridge that connects vital parts of our community and serves as a key link for commerce in and around the region. There will be a range of opinions on the cost, structure, height, and look of any bridge that replaces the current structure. We think it is in our best interests to look at all the facts related to a bridge that will need to be replaced to ensure that the decision is made effectively and efficiently. We are also confident that you would want nothing less for the citizens of your district.

Please feel free to share this letter with your colleagues. We look forward to working with you to help this community improve its prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy R. Sheehy', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Timothy R. Sheehy
President