



### Washington DC

This week I had the opportunity to participate in a very intensive trip to Washington DC to meet with members of Congress, the Department of Transportation and representatives of the Canadian Embassy. The Grand Rapids and Detroit Chambers and the Governor's Office organized the meeting. It gave participants the opportunity to spend time with all of the Michigan Congressional Delegation, senior members of the Department of Transportation and to hear first hand from government and business leaders their perspective on the NITC. (New International Trade Crossing)

Participants in the session included representatives of GVMC, the Detroit and Grand Rapids Chambers of Commerce, Warner Norcross and Judd, The Economic Alliance for Michigan, the International Union of Operating Engineers, URS Corporation, Amway, Herman Miller, City of Grand Rapids, General Motors, Chrysler, Ford and the Michigan Farm Bureau.

We had the opportunity to meet personally with Members of Congress and senior staff including,

Representatives Gary Peters, Dave Camp, Bill Huizenga, Hansen Clarke, Sander Levin, Candice Miller, Tim Walberg, Dale Kildee, Fred Upton, Justin Amash and John Dingell. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers met with us as well. Both Senators Stabenow and Levin met with the group to discuss the issues. In addition, we spent significant time at the United States Department of Transportation and were briefed on the importance of the transportation funding and the NITC from Deputy Secretary of Transportation John Porcari and his senior team.

Over 8,000 trucks per day cross the Windsor-Detroit boarder. General Motors reported that they ship over \$6.5 billion in vehicles and auto parts every year across the boarder and Chrysler makes over 600 truck crossing per day. The Michigan Farm Bureau reported that 30% of all Michigan farm products are sold to Canada.

The U.S. and Canada are the two largest trading partners in the World. The actual value of trade crossing the Ambassador Bridge exceeds \$120 billion and at this single point it exceeds the value of all trade between the U.S. and Great Britain. One-quarter of all U.S.-Canada trade crosses at this single point. This is the single most important international crossing anywhere in the world and 1 in 7 jobs in our area and 1 in 8 in southeastern Michigan are involved in trade crossing the boarder in Detroit. The United States exported more goods last year to Canada than it

did to China, Japan, England, Brazil and Russia combined.

Representatives of the Canadian Embassy told us the NITC is the top priority infrastructure project for their entire nation. Currently, trucks moving from the U.S. to Canada must travel on Windsor city streets and through 18 traffic signals before they can reach the expressway. From Canada's national security perspective, if a secondary inspection of a vehicle is required, they have to travel several miles through the City of Windsor to reach the secondary inspection point.

Through a negotiation with the Department of Transportation, the State of Michigan and the Canadian government, the investment in the project by Canada of \$550 million will be credited toward the requirement for 20% local match on other projects in our state. That means that in these difficult times Michigan will be able to use the Canadian investment as matching funds to leverage federal funding for other Michigan projects. This will directly help our area by providing additional funding for our critical projects.

In addition, in the agreement with Canada, an international authority will be created and through a competitive process a private sector firm will be selected to design, build, operate and maintain the NITC. Michigan has no risk, and will bear no liability for any costs. Our group was very well received by our congressional delegation, USDOT and others we had the opportunity to meet with. I was pleased that GVMC was represented at these very important meetings.

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