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October 8, 2010

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Member of Congress
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Dingell:

As you know, the City of Ann Arbor submitted an application for a TIGER II Discretionary Grant in August of this year to support the re-building of the two bridges on East Stadium Boulevard. As one of the organizations that will partner with the City in the re-construction of this important infrastructure project, I write to inquire about the status of the application.

I know the City's application focused on the extremely deteriorated condition of the bridges. I need not repeat the City's description of the conditions or of the plans to make the necessary improvements to this artery that serves not only Ann Arbor but also the entire region as a thoroughfare between Washtenaw County's two largest cities.

While I am confident that you are fully aware of the many ways these bridges serve our community, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate several key points.

The University of Michigan continues to be among the nation's top public universities. Our academic enterprise, our research activities and our health system are consistently ranked by external organizations as outstanding. This reputation extends further when coupled with the quality of life opportunities in the Ann Arbor area, with our schools, natural features and economic vitality.

What we have seen at the University of Michigan is consistent growth in our activities in all categories, leading us to forecast very robust growth in the future. The University of Michigan's 42,000 students and over 35,000 employees are major contributors to the region's economy. But the contributions hardly stop there. We have articulated ambitious goals to attract new investment and growth in our research activities. We topped over \$1.1 billion in research expenditures last year and are on track to increase that amount in the coming year.

As you know, we acquired the North Campus Research Complex (the former Pfizer R&D site) in June 2009 and have publicly announced our intention of growing up to 3000 more jobs at a site that spans over 170 acres. In addition, our C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Von Voightlander Women's Hospital will add about 500 new health care jobs when they open in late 2011. Our economic development activities, helped by our Office of Tech Transfer, continue to stimulate new business formation – which when added together over the last 5 years – has produced close to 50 new companies.

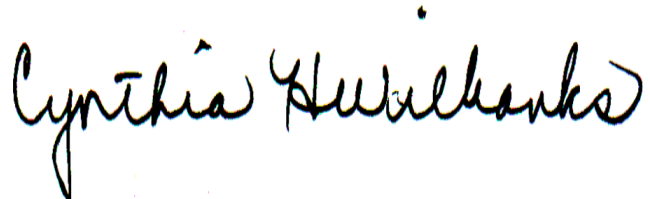
By any measure, this data confirm a growing economic center for the State of Michigan, and one that I know you recognize as important for the state's overall economic transformation. It is one of Michigan's economic bright spots.

Now, allow me to return to the condition of the East Stadium Bridges. This artery is a primary transportation route for this region. Beyond the athletic events that are held at Michigan's football stadium and basketball arena, both immediately adjacent to Stadium Boulevard, thousands of cars cross this thoroughfare on a daily basis for access to their workplace, their home, to retail, commercial and industrial businesses. Quality of life, including the importance of a well-established transportation system and a sound infrastructure, support our ability at the University of Michigan to attract the best and brightest faculty, students and staff. We recognize the role that they play in contributing to our region's economy, one of the state's strongest areas of growth and innovation. We also know the importance of the quality of life features that make our region a destination for education, new business formation, and un-paralleled health care. The East Stadium bridges stand as a blight on the city's infrastructure, and jeopardize a vital link in the transportation opportunities for city and university residents and our visitors.

Your support of the City of Ann Arbor's application for the TIGER II grant is enormously important and we appreciate it. Any information you can provide on the status of the application would be helpful as so many in our community await a decision on this critical request.

If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to be in touch with me. I know I speak for the University administration in thanking you for your efforts and attention to this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia H. Wilbanks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Cynthia H. Wilbanks
Vice President for Government Relations