



Office of the Mayor  
John Hieftje

## CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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October 8, 2010

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

Dear Congressman Dingell:

I write to request an update on the progress being made to win vital funding for the Stadium Bridges here in Ann Arbor.

I know you are well aware of the critical condition of the City's East Stadium Boulevard Bridges. You know how invaluable the bridges are to the economy of the City and Washtenaw County. However, more importantly, these bridges serve as a lifeline to one of the bright lights in Michigan's economy. The University of Michigan (UM), whose facilities envelope these critical bridges, is integral to sustaining and improving the economic health and vitality of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County and the State of Michigan.

As you have seen, the Stadium Boulevard Bridges desperately need reconstruction. The bridges support a crucial east-west regional corridor, one of only three such corridors in our region. These bridges support over 48,000 vehicles per day, span Ann Arbor's rail trunk line and a major north-south corridor, S. State Street. The corridor and bridges serve UM's Medical Center, the State's preeminent medical and research facility, and new Research Park, as well as the nation's largest athletic arena, The Big House, and also connect our region's downtown and business centers with one another as well as citizens of the region. Lastly, the Stadium Boulevard bridges sustain direct access to two interstate highways, Interstate-94 and US-23.

The bridge crossing S. State Street deteriorated to the point, Federal Sufficiency Rating - 2.0 of 100, that the city was forced to remove several beams and reduce weight limits to protect public health and safety. Removal of the beams reduced the four-lane bridge to two lanes with strict weight limits. The impending loss of the bridge, severing the corridor, will result in significant increases in traffic volumes on the two remaining east-west corridors. This increase will inundate all of the critical regional roadways impacting our economy, compromising public safety and degrading residential neighborhoods. As such, loss of these bridges will have a significant deleterious impact on our regional economy and quality of life.

You are also aware the University of Michigan (UM) is an anchor institution in our community, with national significance as a leader in the fields of engineering, health care, and scientific research. UM and Ann Arbor, serve the state as a leading center of academic excellence and Midwest Regional medical and bioscience research facilities. The research and development conducted at the University has resulted in a high number of spin-off companies whom have chosen to make Ann Arbor their home, improving the job creation ability of our state. Further, the Stadium Boulevard Bridges sit immediately adjacent to the UM's Facility Operations Department. This department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of all UM facilities. The bridge project is necessary to sustain access to and from the central maintenance operations center. As such, the University's facilities, especially those located directly adjacent to the project, are of the utmost importance to the State of Michigan. Access to these areas must be maintained.

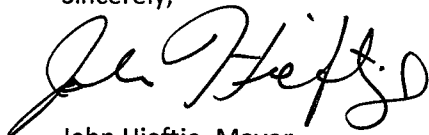
As you know, business leaders in Michigan often point to Ann Arbor with its high tech, research and development economies anchored by the University of Michigan, as the model and best hope for revival in a state that has been hit hard by the long recession.

Just last year a (national network) PBS report titled "Ann Arbor, Michigan's Life Preserver," highlighted the vital role our city plays in the state's economy. The report identified "..., campus and career centers like Ann Arbor are poised to prosper once an economic recovery does take hold,... And keep the campus and career counties attractive to coming generations of highly educated, highly skilled workers who can choose where to live." The loss of the Stadium Bridges would be another crippling blow to the whole region.

And lastly, you know this is a strong project! The analysis performed as part of our funding application reveals **the project has a benefit cost ratio of 11 to 1!** It will **save** the citizens of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County and the state in **excess of \$33M each year** in delay, vehicle operation, and crash costs after the bridges are closed. Further, by providing the requested TIGER II Funding (\$13.9M), approximately **\$250M will be saved** by residents, businesses, and the University. This quarter of a billion dollars is money that could be better spent powering our regional economy ahead, not dragging it down. The selection of this project will greatly benefit the citizens of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County and the State of Michigan.

I know you have been doing everything you can to assist us in this endeavor and we thank you. If there is anything at all we can do on this end, please let us know immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hieftje". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

John Hieftje, Mayor