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State panel recommends creation of bi-state authority to spearhead Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges project

Kentucky and Indiana would work cooperatively

FRANKFORT, Ky. – The Kentucky Public Transportation Infrastructure Authority, appointed eight days earlier by Gov. Steve Beshear, today voted to recommend creation of a bi-state authority that would develop a plan for financing the Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges project.

“Today we take a historic step,” said Gov. Beshear, who received the recommendation. “It is a necessary step if our vision of two new Ohio River bridges between Louisville and southern Indiana is to become reality.”

The project, which also would involve the reconstruction of the Kennedy Interchange, where Interstates 64, 65 and 71 come together in downtown Louisville, is currently estimated at \$4.1 billion. Kentucky’s share would be \$2.9 billion – too great a cost for Kentucky’s traditional system of funding transportation projects.

Recognizing that, Gov. Beshear proposed legislation for creation of a special state authority – the Kentucky Public Transportation Infrastructure Authority – to oversee the development and financing of “mega” projects such as the Ohio River bridges. The General Assembly enacted the legislation as House Bill 3 of the 2009 special session.

The state authority can enter into bi-state agreements with Indiana on projects that would serve both states. It also can create local authorities for projects entirely within Kentucky.

The recommendation to create a bi-state authority for the Ohio River Bridges project will require corresponding action by Indiana. Each state would have seven members on the panel. Gov. Beshear would appoint three of Kentucky’s members and Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson would appoint four. The appointees would require confirmation by the Kentucky Senate and the Louisville Metro Council, respectively.

Acting Transportation Secretary Mike Hancock serves as chairman of the state authority, which has 11 members, six of whom are private citizens. They come from across Kentucky, and all serve on the authority without salary. “Service on this authority

requires a significant personal commitment, and I am deeply grateful to all those who are giving of their time and talents,” Hancock said.

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