



July 23, 2009

Time to move forward with entire bridges project

I have been engaged in the public debate over building new Ohio River bridges for almost 20 years, and I cannot recall a time of more bi-state unity and momentum for fixing Spaghetti Junction and building the two new bridges.

Kentucky and Indiana each adopted legislation to advance the Bridges Project. Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear proclaimed at a news conference to loud applause that we can and will complete the entire project. At the same time, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels announced his desire to move ahead quickly, noting that every day without the bridges represents lost opportunity.

A majority of Louisville Metro Council members are showing their support, too, by sponsoring a resolution that will start the negotiations for a bi-state public authority to oversee the project's financing and construction.

We have waited a long time and worked hard for this kind of unity and progress for Louisville and Southern Indiana. And we need to remain committed and engaged to ensure the entire Ohio River Bridges Project is completed as quickly and as cost effectively as possible.

Like many others — both in Louisville and in Southern Indiana — my views on how we should solve our region's cross-river transportation needs evolved over the years. Based on all the studies and years of debate, and after examining the traffic, community and environmental impacts, I am a strong supporter of the entire Ohio River Bridges Project.

While there is perhaps no solution that will perfectly address everyone's concerns, needs and desires, the time has come to move forward with the entire plan.

Clearly, the project represents a huge investment, but it will pay off with enormous benefits in regional mobility, interchange and bridge safety, economic development, reduced congestion and pollution, and more transportation options. For Louisville and Southern Indiana, it all adds up to a better quality of life for future generations.

JIM WELCH

Prospect, Ky. 40059

The writer is chairman of the Louisville Downtown Development Corporation and an executive committee member of the Bridges Coalition. — Editor.
