



Office of the Will County Board
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Board fights to keep Illiana moving forward

Public private partnership to pay for construction, operation

JOLIET, IL- The Will County Board today approved a resolution supporting the proposed Illiana Expressway as part of Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) GoTo2040 capital plan, citing the regional need for new highway capacity.

"The Board is unyielding in its support for constructing the Illiana, and we stand with Illinois legislators that have already given the green light for the project," said Speaker Herbert Brooks, Jr. "Anyone that drives on I-80/94 understands the congestion and gridlock our region is facing and the importance of improving the transportation infrastructure in and around Chicago."

The Illiana was first conceived by famed architect Daniel Burnham more than a century ago. The 47-mile route would link Interstate 65 in Indiana with I-55 in Illinois.

"With one of the largest inland ports in the country, Will County handles a massive amount of freight and truck traffic on a daily basis," said Republican caucus chair Jim Moustis (R-Frankfort). "We have reached a tipping point with our highways and byways, and the Illiana has been recognized by officials at all levels of government as absolutely necessary to keep the economy of our region growing."

Last month, Ann Schneider, secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), reiterated her support for the Illiana in a letter to CMAP, calling the expressway a common sense and strategic transportation investment. She pointed to the billions of dollars in goods being imported and exported from Will County as reason enough to keep the project moving forward.

Governor Quinn's office has projected the project would generate 14,000 long term jobs in Illinois. Recently, Quinn said he hoped to break ground in 2015.

"The Illiana will be funded and operated under a public private partnership agreement, so that private sector financing will pay for the construction and operation of the roadway," said Democratic caucus chair Diane Zigrossi (D-Crest Hill). "This is a unique public works project that will benefit the Chicago metropolitan area as well as provide thousands of jobs for Illinois residents and without question is needed to relieve the burden being placed on our current transportation system."

A wide range of organizations have voiced support for the Illiana from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute to AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions in the United States. All support the Illiana being included in the fiscally constrained capital plan of GoTo2040.

(more)

"To have such broad support from businesses, labor, civic organizations, and numerous units of government, I am hopeful the region's planning agencies will make the best decision for the region," said Bob Howard (D-Beecher), chair of the legislative and policy committee. "The Illiana is the best and most cost effective way to address congestion on I-80, I-55, I-80/94 and I-57."

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