



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

February 1, 1993

The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to transmit a brief interim report on the status of the Interstate 66 feasibility study in response to House Report 102-639, Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 1993. Funding for this study was appropriated by the fiscal year 1991 Appropriations Act for the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies. Additional information pertaining to the study was contained in House Report 101-892, Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 1991.

The enclosed interim report presents background information about the study and describes the study objectives, study approach and current status. Because of the geographic coverage of this study, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) decided at an early date that active participation by the affected States was needed. As a result, considerable time was required initially to obtain the support of the States, establish a steering committee to direct the study, and work out funding arrangements and administrative details for managing the study. The study is now well under way and scheduled for completion in September 1993.

Under the direction of a steering committee that includes representatives from 11 States and the FHWA, the study is examining multimodal transportation options for serving the transcontinental corridor identified in House Report 101-892. A range of concepts and alternative technologies are being explored to see if they are applicable to the corridor and if they provide practical alternatives for meeting future travel demands. The study approach described in the interim report is expected to provide valuable information to the affected States as well as meet the objectives established by House Report 101-892.

An identical letter was sent to Congressman Bob Carr, Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation and Related Agencies, United States House of Representatives.

Sincerely yours,



E. Dean Carlson
Executive Director

Enclosure

cc:
The Honorable Alfonse M. D'Amato
Ranking Minority Member

Federal Highway Administration
HEP-12:TRW:vn:65002:01-22-93
Revised:01-27-93 930229.026
Revised:01-29-93
Revised:02-02-93

cc: Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato
Minority Ranking Member

cc: Congressman Frank R. Wolf
Minority Ranking Member

cc: B-1, I-10
HOA-3, HOA(ES)
HPA-1, HDA-1, HFS-1, HFS-10
HPD-1, HEP-1, HEP-10
HEP-12
Reader File Chron File
Weingroff, Weeks, Gorman
Cazenas (15 copies)

I-66 Feasibility Study Interim Report

Background

The fiscal year 1991 Appropriations Act for the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies appropriated \$1,275,000 for a study of the feasibility of a major east-west transportation corridor from Virginia to California. The study is now commonly referred to as the I-66 Feasibility Study or the Transamerica Transportation Corridor Feasibility Study.

Preliminary information about the proposed study was initially provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to the 18 States within the general study corridor. In February 1991, an organizational meeting was held to determine the extent of interest in the study by the 18 affected States. Representatives from 14 States attended, and 11 States subsequently agreed to contribute matching funds. The States that contributed matching funds are: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New Mexico, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia. A steering committee, consisting of a representative from each of the 11 States and the FHWA, was organized to provide technical direction to the study. The Missouri Highway and Transportation Department volunteered to serve as the administrative agent for the study.

A contract was executed by the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department with Wilbur Smith Associates on June 15, 1992, to conduct the study under the technical direction of the steering committee. September 15, 1993, is specified in the contract as the completion date for the study.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to identify and evaluate multimodal transportation options and intermodal linkages for the 21st century (30 to 50 years) in an east-west transportation corridor bounded on the north by I-70 and on the south by I-40. The study will investigate whether another Interstate highway is needed and is feasible from an engineering, social, economic, environmental, and institutional perspective. In addition to looking at traditional highway options, the study will examine the feasibility of evolving technologies, such as high-speed rail and intelligent vehicle highway systems.

Study Approach

The study corridor covers approximately 3,000 miles in length and between 250 to 350 miles in width. Because of the length and breadth of the corridor and the 30 to 50-year horizon, the study will be strategic in nature and focus on a macro scale as opposed to specific alignments and details. This approach allows the

FHWA and the affected States to investigate the need for, and feasibility of, new approaches to transportation, explore new techniques, technologies and concepts, and intergovernmental arrangements. Within this context, a variety of systems alternatives will be considered, including mode and technology options, joint use options, and corridor options. Specifically, the conceptual and institutional feasibility and corridor and segment applicability of transportation options in the following areas will be examined:

- Engineering (construction and cost)
- Economic (efficiency, productivity, development)
- Financial (costs, revenues, funding)
- Other Implications (environmental, energy, safety, demographic)
- Need (passenger and freight utilization)
- Institutional (legal, legislative, public policy)

The study is structured around eight specific tasks: 1) study concepts and procedures, 2) existing conditions, 3) 21st century opportunities, 4) concepts evaluations, 5) corridor applications, 6) feasibility assessments, 7) study conclusions, and 8) study products. A working report will be prepared for each task and reviewed by the steering committee to ensure that the objectives of the study are met.

Because of strong public interest in the study, a series of four newsletters will be prepared for use by the States to inform interested parties of the progress of the study.

Status

The study is on schedule. Reports have been prepared by the consultant for the first two tasks--Study Concepts and Procedures and Existing Conditions--and accepted by the steering committee. The third work task will be completed in early February 1993. The report on Study Concepts and Procedures presents the overall approach for conducting the study; the report on Existing Conditions discusses the various physiographic, geologic, demographic, and economic characteristics of the corridor and presents public policy issues and information on transportation patterns for passenger and freight travel. The report for the third task -- 21st Century Opportunities--will serve as a resource document for a meeting of expert panelists in early February 1993 who will discuss emerging trends that will have a bearing on the study corridor and examine evolving transportation technologies. These tasks will lead to an evaluation of alternative concepts, the identification of possible corridor applications, and an assessment of the feasibility of transportation concepts and their applicability to the corridor.

The first of four newsletters was distributed by the States to interested parties in August 1992. The first newsletter provided background information about the corridor and the study objectives and approach. Future newsletters will emphasize the results of the various tasks.