

January 9, 2007

## **Delta Regional Authority's Vision For Our Transportation Future**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on behalf of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) the following two suggestions for "Significant Systematic Changes to Transportation Infrastructure Capacity".

1. **DRA's "Delta Development Highway System"** – At its planning retreat in February 2005, the DRA board which I am the Federal Co-chairman of, and the governors of the eight DRA participating states (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee), voted to make transportation one of the agency's three major policy development areas along with health improvement and information technology. Toward that end, the DRA began work with its consultants (Wilbur Smith Associates, Michael Baker Company and Neel-Schaeffer), the eight state DOTs and the local development districts in the region to collectively produce a "Delta Development Highway System", patterned after the highly successful "Appalachian Development Highway System".

When work is completed on the transportation plan, February 2007, the DRA will present the president and Congress with its "Delta Development Highway Plan" (DDHS), which will include:

- Criteria for inclusion (and subsequent additions) to the DDHS,
- An assessment of DRA's highway needs and assets,
- A rolling, twenty-year plan for a designated highway system with corridor connections,
- Statements of highway design standards and planning-level costs,
- Investment priorities, listed within three tiers of priority – near-, intermediate-, long-term and
- Economic benefits, which will address: the economics of construction, corridor competitive position, local business development, travel and tourism and DRA region-wide economic development.

2. **Recommendations for enhancement of the DRA Region's global-scale inter-modal capacity** – DRA's research in regard to global inter-modal facilities and freight distribution has led the DRA to believe each continent will have the fewest number of such facilities needed to move such cargo as expeditiously and cheaply as possible, around the world. Additionally, at the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's field hearing in Memphis, several of the

panelists recommended to the commission that a national policy on inter-modal facilities was very much needed.

Accordingly, as DRA works through its preparation of the assets and needs study of its Region in a multi-modal context, per Section 1923 of SAFETEA-LU, DRA will also examine the need(s) for expansion of global-scale inter-modal capacity in the Region. While this is not yet a recommendation with specifics, it is a formal recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pete Johnson,  
Federal Co-chairman  
Delta Regional Authority