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March 8, 2016

Mr. Peter Osborn
Federal Highway Administration
Division Administrator
New York Division Office
Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building
Room 719
11A Clinton Ave.
Albany, NY 12207

**Re: Expedited consideration of Draft Design Report/Environmental Assessment for the
Niagara Gorge Corridor Project (Pin 5757.91.121)**

Dear Mr. Osborn:

It has been conveyed to me that all but one of the several components of the Draft Design Report for the Niagara Gorge Corridor Project have been received by the New York Division of the Federal Highway Administration. It has been further conveyed to me that the Division has indicated that it will not begin review of any portion of this large, six-volume document until this final component is also received. I write today to request that the Division immediately begin its review of this document, concomitant with the preparation of the one remaining component.

Apparently, about three days of field work are required in order complete the missing component, called a "Phase 1B" archaeological study, and this work cannot commence until the snow has melted. Once this field work is completed, there must be consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and other administrative steps, which means that it may be one month or more before this component is submitted to FHWA. Substantively, there is no reason why this should hold up the project; Even if previously-unknown archaeological resources are discovered in the process of the field work, which is not anticipated, the right-of-way associated with this project is sufficiently generous to allow for the avoidance of any impacts.

Transportation advocates lament the fact that the authorization and appropriation levels set by Congress for federal transportation funding fall well short of what is necessary to keep the nation's transportation networks in a state of good repair. I share this concern. In this fiscally constrained environment, when projects present themselves with substantial funding from outside the usual

federal funding streams, FHWA should work to accelerate and advance these projects. Given that the New York Power Authority has committed to pay all of the design costs and 70% of the construction costs for the Niagara Gorge Corridor Project, in part because of their historic responsibility for the outdated infrastructure to be replacedⁱ, I respectfully suggest FHWA should accelerate this project by beginning consideration of this draft design report immediately.

Thank you very much for your leadership and your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

ⁱ Office of Congressman Brian Higgins, The Niagara Falls Waterfront: NYPA's Responsibility for the Robert Moses Parkway, Washington, D.C., January 17, 2013.
https://higgins.house.gov/sites/higgins.house.gov/files/011713_NYPAsResponsibilityforRobertMosesPkwvy.pdf