



THE
LAKE HOUSTON
AREA CHAMBER
of Commerce

EST HUMBLE, TX 1923

July 30, 2019

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

RE: Grand Parkway (SH 99) inclusion in the Unified Transportation Program

Dear Governor Abbott,

On behalf of more than 7,500 businesses in the Lake Houston Area comprised of Kingwood, Humble, Atascocita, Summerwood and Fall Creek, I write to you as the CEO of the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce concerning the possible exclusion of Grand Parkway (SH 99) in the Unified Transportation Program.

It has come to our attention that the Texas Transportation Commission is considering removing Segments B, C, D, and the connectors of Segment I of the Grand Parkway Project (SH 99) from the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) due to the desire to remove toll projects from the UTP. The Lake Houston Area Chamber supports SH 99 as a toll project and urges the Commission to include the project's position in the UTP.

As we are in a fast-growth area of Houston with a population of more than 280,0000, transportation is a top priority. Our ability to grow jobs, attract employers and increase the commercial tax base is heavily dependent on the region's ease of transportation and mobility. Removing segments and connectors of SH 99 will impede our community's growth by negatively impacting our ability to attract employers and talent to our area.

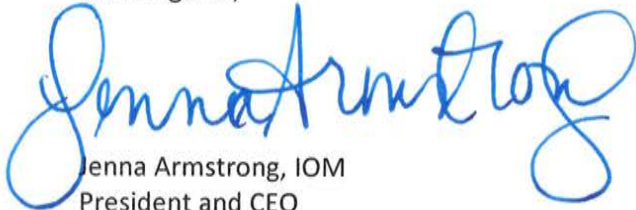
A decade ago, TxDOT entered into a Market Valuation Waiver Agreement with the seven counties through which SH 99 traverses, creating the basis for the project's development and a sense of assurance to the region, its community members, and investors that the project had TxDOT's support. The Commission should not undo these assurances by reversing important decisions made by previous commissioners and local governments.

The entirety of SH 99 not only relieves congestion by providing alternative routes to bypass the central city, but also the segments being considered are crucial factors to enhancing regional safety. They ease and expedite movement of freight to and from the port. They provide crucial infrastructure for the entire Texas energy sector. And, importantly, they secure an alternative evacuation route in case of an emergency.

Removing segments of SH 99 from the UTP will be a significant step backward for the region. Make no mistake, our region supports this toll project. The economic growth of the Lake Houston Area is dependent upon its completion.

The Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce supports using all available tools and resources to ensure transportation infrastructure projects are completed in a timely and effective manner. Given limitations on state highway and local funds, we further emphasize our support for the SH 99 as a toll project and encourage the Commission to maintain the project's position in the UTP.

Best Regards,



Jenna Armstrong, IOM
President and CEO
Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce

CC:

Senator Carol Alvarado
Senator Brandon Creighton
Senator John Whitmire
State Representative Harold Dutton
State Representative Dan Huberty
State Representative Senfronia Thompson