



OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

240 STATE CAPITOL
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334

CASEY CAGLE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

May 29, 2008

The Honorable Sam Olens
Chairman
Cobb County Board of Commissioners
100 Cherokee Street, Ste 300
Marietta, GA 30090-7000

Dear Sam,

Thank you for meeting with me on May 28 to share your thoughts and concerns regarding the growing transportation crisis in our state.

The transportation issue in Georgia, especially as it relates to congestion in metro Atlanta, has clearly reached a boiling point, and we cannot afford to wait any longer to address it. As we discussed, we are going to continue moving forward on this issue, working to establish a vision for a statewide transportation plan and a solution for funding it. Throughout this process, I hope that you will stay engaged, as you will play an important role in making any transportation solution successful.

Thank you once again for meeting with me. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey Cagle".

Casey Cagle
Lt. Governor of Georgia

CC/mm



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CASEY CAGLE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

June 10, 2008

Dear [ARC Board Member]

As you know, Chairman Sam Olens recently used the Atlanta Regional Commission's taxpayer-funded newsletter as a venue for attacking the leadership of the Georgia State Senate. Unfortunately, Sam's column -- in addition to running contrary to mission of the ARC to bring the region together -- contains several erroneous statements. It is disappointing he has chosen to complain about the past instead of looking ahead to the future. And, I am sure his view does not represent the opinion of many ARC members. However, since those false charges were directed in part at the State Senate and printed in your newsletter, I feel a responsibility to set the record straight.

First, Sam writes that the House of Representatives was the only body working to address this issue "with concerted leadership from the top." In reality, the Senate was the first to pass a TSPLOST constitutional amendment, which I drafted and had introduced. And, we did so with overwhelming bi-partisan support. If the Senate had not led on this issue -- as well as passing a statewide water plan -- strongly and early, we would not have gotten as close as we did to the finish line. Chairman Vance Smith and others worked hard and effectively in the House, but the reality is that both chambers focused heavily on this issue.

Sam also alleges that leaders outside the House "either stonewalled or actively opposed legislation to provide new funding for greater mobility in our state." Here again, this attack does not square with the facts. The truth is that I and top Senate leaders introduced transportation funding legislation, passed it in the Senate, spent countless hours negotiating in good faith with House leaders, suspended the Senate rules to vote twice on passing the final bill, and served as public spokesmen for the TSPLOST effort.



The facts are these: we worked hard this session to get across the finish line, and we are now looking for creative ways to move forward on a faster timetable. In fact, I plan to introduce a comprehensive revised proposal to relieve congestion on a faster timetable months before the next session.

I would encourage Chairman Olens and the ARC to be a part of this solution instead of wasting valuable time -- and limited taxpayer resources -- assigning blame and otherwise playing politics. We can reduce gridlock and get metro Atlanta moving, but we aren't going to get there by attacking our allies. We need more solutions and less politics when it comes to transportation in our region. I am committed to that goal and I trust the leadership of ARC is as well.

As always, thank you for your work on behalf of Metro Atlanta. I look forward to continued discussions of transportation this summer, and implementing a concrete legislative solution early next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey Cagle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Casey Cagle
Lt. Governor of Georgia

CC/mm

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Congestion Relief Requires Leadership



EVERYWHERE YOU go, traffic congestion in metro Atlanta is a main topic of conversation. It's not simply inconvenient; it's a critical economic issue, for both metro Atlanta and Georgia. Because

of congestion, businesses are considering the wisdom of staying in this area...and others that are looking to possibly relocate to Atlanta are often choosing other less congested options like Charlotte and Nashville.

The Georgia General Assembly had a chance to provide leadership and address this issue in the 2008 session. They missed the boat by three votes. Why? Lack of concerted leadership from the top.

Legislation failed in the final minutes of the session that would have allowed residents throughout Georgia to decide via regional referenda whether to fund congestion-relieving projects through a one percent sales tax. Now, the economic engine of the state is mired in traffic for another long year.

A number of legislators stepped up to the plate. No one could have exerted more effort towards addressing traffic congestion through pursuit of new funding legislation than House Speaker Glenn Richardson, Senator Jeff Mullis and Representative Vance Smith. Members of the conference committee, Senators Doug Stoner and Don Balfour and Representatives Donna Sheldon and Calvin Smyre, deserve our sincere thanks.

However, our top leaders either stonewalled or actively opposed legislation to provide new funding for greater mobility in our state, and

without their support, many legislators didn't see it as a priority.

This is an issue for our entire state. Each area of Georgia can benefit from new transportation funding mechanisms, considering the current GDOT funding deficit of more than \$1 billion. Furthermore, when you hurt metro Atlanta's economy, you are helping the economies of Charlotte and Nashville and Jacksonville — not Albany and Columbus and Augusta.

Other cities in the Southeast and around the country are leaping ahead with new or expanded transit projects and improved roads to move people and goods more efficiently.

The average annual cost of congestion per person in the 10-county metro Atlanta area is projected to be \$3,470 by 2030. The cost to business in lost productivity is even greater. By contrast, the average annual cost of a regional one percent sales tax in the same timeframe would be only \$215 per person. The state DOT has new leadership and is undergoing a much needed restructuring. But, even an effectual GDOT can't solve our congestion problems without additional funding.

In a new survey conducted by the Transit Planning Board, the majority of residents throughout an 11-county metro Atlanta area heartily support a new sales tax to fund new road, rail and bus options — some 58 percent overall. So what's stopping us from moving ahead? Citizens have to demand action. We can't let another election cycle go by without making transportation a key election issue. Call the Governor and Lt. Governor. Demand the relief that we all deserve and that is long overdue.

— Sam Olens, ARC Chairman

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