

**PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED AT NIRPC COMMISSION AND POLICY MEETINGS REGARDING THE
ILLIANA TOLL ROAD**

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

January 8 2013

Ted Gross, resident of Lowell voiced opposition on behalf of residents of south Lake County to the Illiana Tollway.

August 13, 2013

- 11th Dist. State Rep. Rick Niemeyer commented he attended several meetings on the Illiana, including one with the Governor, and will bring comments to the September TPC meeting.
- Pat Mussman, West Creek Twp., expressed concern that truths are not being told regarding the Illiana and commented that IDOT presented at a meeting in Will County, Illinois and was told the no build option was off the table and that the toll road was never intended to benefit the communities in the corridor, but only to get truck traffic for the warehouses and intermodals in Illinois.
- Sandy Linden, Cedar Creek, IN commented that there are better ways to spend our transportation money to benefit Indiana. The Illiana would provide no benefit to Lake, Porter or La Porte counties. Ms. Linden referred to a CMAP report which stated that 33 miles of expressway will add lanes to accompany the Illiana for a total cost of \$1.5 billion in 2009 dollars. It also states there will be increased economic growth in Will County, with a reduction in growth in Kane and Kendall Counties. Indiana communities will spend a good portion of their state and federal funds to maintain access roads, I-65 and SR 41 due to increased traffic from the Illiana. Even with the P3 option, we still have to purchase the land, and maintain adjoining roads. Who in Indiana will pay the Illiana's private company for lost tolls when I-65 is shut down in the winter and where will the trucks go when there is a major accident? Since the freeway option is off the table, all previous studies and calculations should be voided. The Illiana's original purpose of alleviating congestion on the Borman is no longer valid as the Borman widening project has solved that issue. The sole purpose of the Illiana is to alleviate truck traffic to the intermodals in Illinois. Other better options must be evaluated. Ms. Linden asked that NIRPC not include the Illiana in its 2040 Plan.
- Harold Mussman, West Creek Twp., commented that the intermodals near Joliet actually created a nuisance due to poor planning and they maintain the Illiana would relieve that congestion. A CNN rail line runs just north of Ellwood and a new one is unnecessary. Mr. Mussman stated he does not support the Illiana.
- Ted Gross, Lowell, commented that INDOT and IDOT have overemphasized the quantity of jobs to be created in Indiana and \$41 million worth of property still needs to be purchased. Where is all this money coming from? Mr. Gross called for support for the Gary Airport, a new shipping port at Inland Steel, a trauma center and improvement of our current highways.

October 8, 2013

- Ted Gross, Lowell resident said the Illiana is a toll road not an expressway. He said that soil tests and other environmental assessments were made and about 50% of the 10-12 mile Indiana section of the highway is wetlands or lakes. If the intersection is put in at SR 55, they will have to remove the Lake Julia Dam and lower the lake which will also hurt Twin Lakes. Within a half mile of 163rd, over 40 homes are involved. There is no consideration of where they will put the Illiana. Results of an informal truck survey showed that drivers will not pay the tolls. Indiana has to buy the property and the taxpayers will pay more money. Also, the West Creek watershed was supposed to be a state lake going from north junction route 2 to 231 or the old Route 8. There were 3 artesian wells. Let's keep Lake County green.
- Sandy Linden, Cedar Creek, IN resident, inquired as to what public comments will be reported. Steve Strains said all comments received whether by mail, email, phone, petitions and also during the public comment portion of all NIRPC minutes will be included. Mitch Barloga added that the website will allow for a form to be filled out by the public and verbal comments can be given by calling 219-763-6060, extension 160. Comments submitted by any means will all weigh equally.

November 19, 2013

- Stacey Meyers read and presented a copy of a letter from Openlands urging NIRPC to reject the request by the Indiana Department of Transportation to add the proposed Illiana toll road to the 2040 CRP and region's Transportation Improvement Program. The written statement was submitted and added to the Comments Received November 16-20 file.
- Doug Straders, Ironworkers Union, Northwest Indiana Building and Construction Trades Council, read and submitted a resolution in support of the construction of the Illiana. The written resolution was submitted and added to the Comments Received November 16-20 file.
- Sandy Linden, Lowell, read and submitted comments opposing the Illiana. The written statement was submitted and added to the Comments Received November 16-20 file.
- Tom Fraley, IIFFC presented 156 petitions of operating engineers who work and live in northwest Indiana supporting the Illiana expressway. Mr. Fraley referred to the Times "Do you Support the Illiana" online poll noting that as of last night, 69.8% were in support of the Illiana and 30.2% were against it. Also, 6 of his 20 years as a patrol officer were spent on the Indiana Toll Road and said during winters and with bad accidents, the Indiana Toll Road was open when US 30 and all the other highways were closed due to the weather. Toll roads are able to finance and keep their roads clear whereas the state highways don't have the budget or manpower to keep their roads clear. The Illiana will stay open when other roads are not.
- Bruce Homan(sp), Peotone representing the No Illiana for Us group presented petitions with 4,416 signatures opposed to the Illiana. He said, "Questions were asked at this meeting which have common sense value. Intermodal is a big industry in Wilmington, Illinois. But Wilmington and Elwood are not going to control the world forever. There is already an intermodal in Kingsbury serviced by the CSX railroad. Others are being proposed in Illinois. Free enterprise will not let one segment of the county or of Illinois dominate profitability for other companies. The Illiana is only to service a few businesses at the expense of all the taxpayers. I have

farmland in the pathway and also represents the farmers that do not want the Illiana. There are many other options that should have been studied to relieve the traffic around the Kankakee and Momence area hooking into the Indiana corridor. Please consider not adding the Illiana to your 2040 Plan.

- Nell Fabish(sp) Lowell, said “I am a property owner impacted by the Illiana and realize that will not be a big consideration. Everybody builds something somewhere that impacts people. Wikipedia lists the “bridge to nowhere”. This is what I think the Illiana is. One that serves a lower population at a higher spending cost. It doesn’t create jobs for the people in Indiana. Short term jobs yes, but people want full-time jobs. It doesn’t revitalize northwest Indiana, it doesn’t revitalize 41, it doesn’t help the towns that are in the path of this. I work at the library and people talk about it, saying “why aren’t they paying attention to northwest Indiana? The need for jobs? The need for revitalization? Why don’t they concentrate on a rail line and they’ve been talking about that for a long time from South Bend to Northwest Indiana, to provide job opportunities for the people who live out there. This will be a little used road. It will help Illinois but it’s not going to help Indiana. I truly believe this is the bridge to nowhere.
- Patricia Mussman, Lowell, said “I believe that Gary, Hammond, East Chicago and Whiting need opportunities for jobs. There is a lot of land up there that could be reclaimed. You have the South Shore rail, the Port and the existing toll road that is not operating at capacity because it is a toll road. You also have the opportunity to pursue the Gary airport with a lot of enthusiasm and putting a road up there to service that airport makes sense. Building a second port makes sense. Building a trauma center will bring good, long term jobs to the area. This is what we need. You did the environmental justice study. You want to put people to work. People of color, minority people and people who are in poverty. The way to do that is to bring opportunity to their area, not build a road that won’t service anybody except the Elwood-Joliet-Wilmington corridor with the intermodals and warehouses there. Money would be better spent improving Cline Avenue Bridge and all of northern Indiana. We could bring in rail and that would alleviate a lot more cars on the road. If we were to bring the South Shore down to Lowell, how many cars would be removed from that traffic flow that would allow 41 and a lot more existing roads to run more smoothly? There are better ways to put our public-private money or our tax money to work that would make a lot more sense. Why are a few trucking companies in a position to be favored with this road and why are they allowed to destroy all the farm businesses that are in the path of this road? They are businesses, make no mistake. It is my request that you vote NO for the Illiana and look at better solutions. I do think the wrong questions have been asked. We need to ask better questions about where our money could be better spent.
- Rep. Rick Niemeyer stated that he would like to make a presentation, and asked that in the interest of time, he be allowed to make that presentation at the December 3 meeting before the vote. Chairman Pettit replied he will allow it as well as any other comments before the TPC votes as a recommending body to the full Commission.
- Shawn Kaczmarek, founder of the Save the Valley group, which mission is to combine green space, economic development and high tech. Personally and professionally, I am against the Illiana but for consideration for the engineers here, high tech can be unusually high tech relative to transport technology opportunities. I would like the committee to consider that if it looks nebulous, even from an engineering modeling point of view at this point, perhaps a one or two

year delay could live with the existing congestion and allow for some other opportunities specifically recommending to the governors and other officials is that NIRPC could use a high tech PhD person on their team to work with the think tank downstate to look at opportunity windows in transport technology that may allow a better option profile relative to having a lot of green space, having a lot of economic opportunity and moving our community in a group into a much different position relative to our quality of life. The California state economy is very high tech and is the 12th biggest economy on the planet. That is what high tech does. If it looks nebulous, a delay of a year or two may allow more of a strategic opportunity to look at some other solutions other than what they are trying to do with releasing congestion via the Illiana highway. This is my first time here at one of these meetings and it was very professionally done and its really impressive how well you all work together.

- Andrew Armstrong, ELPC, Chicago, IL, said his company is a Midwest environmental quality and economic development organization working on transportation issues in Indiana, Illinois and across the Midwest. ELPC opposes the Illiana. We have a number of concerns and one of the most important is the financial and feasibility of the road. In this time of limited transportation funds, smart transportation policy means fixing it first. It means leveraging the limited funds you have to improve, expand and revitalize the existing assets in existing communities. Building a brand new 47 mile toll way through farmlands and prairies doesn't make financial sense. As far back as March 2012, ELPC and other organizations including CMAP have been asking for financial details of the Illiana planners and the answer has always been we'll give you the financial details when the time is appropriate. We're well past that time now. INDOT is asking NIRPC to add this project to the comprehensive regional plan which is fiscally constrained. INDOT has not shown that the project can pay for itself within the time horizon without impacting other regional transportation priorities. We do know this toll way would need to be financed using availability payments. Under this model, state taxpayers would be obligated to make guaranteed payments to the private contractor that is selected to design, build, finance operate and maintain the toll road. To be very clear, state taxpayers, not the private sector, would bear the risk that revenues from tolling the Illiana would not be sufficient to meet those availability payments. We have heard that investors will tell us if the Illiana is a good deal. They are wrong. Under this deal, taxpayers would bear all the risk and investors would get guaranteed payments. I don't think we need the investors to tell us whether or not this is a good deal. We need NIRPC to ask the hard questions about this project's bleak financial prospects. If this project cannot pay for itself within the timeframe of the comprehensive regional plan, it can't be fiscally constrained unless all the other regional transportation priorities are abandoned. INDOT has not provided the necessary answers to these questions and therefore, we ask this committee and NIRPC to vote NO on the Illiana.

NIRPC Executive Board/Full Commission Meetings

July 18, 2013

- Julie Roesler of the Sierra Club said that the Sierra Club submitted a resolution opposing the Illiana. Commissioner Van Til commented that it would be good to address their specific concerns.
- Ryan Ordonez-Haggard of Gary spoke in favor of the Illiana. The Gary Chicago International Airport has access to the global market. He thanked Commissioner Freeman-Wilson for the new

townhomes at 21st and Jefferson. He is a Purdue student, he is currently working on a project at the east entrance to Arcelor-Mittal at US 12.

August 29, 2013

- George Malis, Sierra Club stated the Sierra Club Duneland Group adopted a resolution opposing the Illiana and supports no-build.
- Jim Bartos thanked the Commission for their public service, the bike trails and the work on the expressway. He said he is a proponent of the Gary Airport and does not support the Illiana. He urged the Commission to take a stand on the Illiana which he believes will benefit our competitors. Mr. Bartos added that with regard to the West Lake Corridor Plan, the region needs a system that loops our area which would take care of all northwest Indiana residents. Commissioner McDermott complimented Mr. Bartos on his professionalism and responded that the Legislative Committee will not take a stand on the Illiana as there is no longer any pending legislation on it.

September 19, 2013

- Commissioner Robert Carnahan stated that the Cedar Lake Town Council supports the Illiana and the West Lake Corridor expansion.
- Jim Bartos thanked the Commission for their public service, the bike trails and the work on the expressway. He said he is a proponent of the Gary Airport and does not support the Illiana. He urged the Commission to take a stand on the Illiana which he believes will benefit our competitors. Mr. Bartos added that with regard to the West Lake Corridor Plan, the region needs a system that loops our area which would take care of all northwest Indiana residents. Commissioner McDermott complimented Mr. Bartos on his professionalism and responded that the Legislative Committee will not take a stand on the Illiana as there is no longer any pending legislation on it.

October 17, 2013

- Louise Karuwoski ^(sp), Sierra Club said she and the Sierra Club do not support the Illiana and they sent a resolution to NIRPC.

Comments heard during the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Planning Process

- Illiana is being included but Illinois did not include it in their CRP. It's only in environmental study stage. Seems like an endorsement for Illiana.
- This plan does not pay enough attention to or adequately address the issues of improvements to the Borman Expressway and the planned Illiana Expressway
- Planning for the super sprawl inducing Illiana toll road is underway after its untruthful marketing as a major Borman traffic reliever (when it's only 2%) and a "no cost to the taxpayer" new roadway. Yet there is no plan for what happens when the petroleum era is unmistakably over. Peak oil is already upon us as the US and the region depend on Canada's environmentally disastrous tar sands oil, and other risky sources of fossil fuel such as deep water drilling and natural gas fracking. The plan still assumes unlimited fossil fuel energy input, even if it is at the cost of our own demise with the tar sands and climate change. The region is already suffering from the bad storms and flooding of climate change, which should be a stimulus to change direction. Despite the "happy talk" in the

CRP, where we are actually heading at present is not environmentally, socially, or economically sustainable. The region would be much better off in the long run changing direction towards sustainability as soon as possible.

- In the past, the Illiana was said to make it impossible to conform to our regional air pollution budget, but that is not discussed any more.