

# Texas Transportation Commission

125 E 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483

October 4, 2007

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
United States House of Representatives  
1224 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Burgess:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the FM 407 bridge over I-35E in Lewisville, Texas. We at the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) recognized the severity of the problem and took immediate steps to rectify the situation the night the incident occurred. One of our five goals is to enhance safety on our highways. Our other goals are to improve air quality, expand economic opportunity, reduce congestion, and increase the asset value of our system.

We have taken steps to certify that this bridge is not in danger of collapse. It is a prestressed beam design, and while the holes in the concrete deck are an immediate maintenance concern, they do not threaten the stability or structural integrity of the bridge. We have an aggressive inspection program for all on-system and off-system bridges throughout the state. All bridges are formally inspected every two years by a licensed engineer trained in this field. In addition, each on-system bridge is visually inspected by the maintenance section every six months and following severe weather events to inspect for abnormalities and potential problems.

Let me give you an update on the status of the FM 407 bridge and the actions we plan to take in the near future.

- We repaired the bridge deck hole the night it developed (please see attached pictures);
- We thoroughly examined the top and bottom of the deck to ensure no additional concrete will dislodge and fall;
- We will seal the top of the deck to prevent further water intrusion;
- We will install a protection system between the beam bays and beneath the deck to prevent debris from falling on the I-35E pavement below; and
- We will replace this bridge when I-35E is rebuilt with money from the SH 121 Concession Fee.

I would like to note that this past June, staff informed the Texas Transportation Commission members that more than \$6 billion would need to be transferred from our construction budget to preserve the current quality of our state highway system over the next five years. Replacing or rehabilitating all of the state's structurally deficient bridges—both on- and off-system—over the next ten years will cost more than \$2.1 billion. While maintaining Texas' roads and bridges to our high safety standards is a key goal of the department, keeping our transportation system in good repair is increasingly expensive. The movement of this money to maintenance will mean fewer dollars for mobility projects.

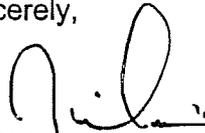
THE TEXAS PLAN

REDUCE CONGESTION • ENHANCE SAFETY • EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY • IMPROVE AIR QUALITY  
INCREASE THE VALUE OF OUR TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

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Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that Texas roads and bridges are safe. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (512) 305-9509, or if your staff should have any questions, they may contact Robin Ayers, Congressional Liaison in the Government and Public Affairs Division at (512) 463-8345.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ric Williamson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "W".

Ric Williamson

Chair

Texas Transportation Commission

Attachments

cc: The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, District Office  
The Honorable Mary Peters, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary  
Texas Transportation Commission  
Amadeo Saenz, Jr., P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT  
William L. Hale, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT  
Robin Ayers, Government and Public Affairs Division, TxDOT