



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MnDOT Commits to Highway 14 EIS Completion

Commissioner's Letter Meets Guidelines Vetoed by Governor During Legislative Session

Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Tom Sorel has confirmed his Department's commitment toward completing two unfinished environmental impact statements along Highway 14. The Commissioner's pledge, contained in a July 1st letter to Highway 14 legislators and the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership, meets the guidelines toward completing the two environmental impact statements passed by the legislature this session, yet vetoed by Governor Tim Pawlenty.

"This is an important commitment by the Department of Transportation to move Highway 14 closer to completion," said North Mankato Mayor and Highway 14 President Gary Zellmer. "I applaud the Commissioner's willingness to abide by the legislature and public's demand to complete these two environmental impact segments without further delay."

The final version of the Highway 14 provision as passed by the legislature required the New Ulm to North Mankato segment be completed by the end of 2010, and the Owatonna to Dodge Center segment completed by the end of May, 2010. Any delays in the timelines would have triggered monthly public reporting requirements by MnDOT on the status of the environmental impact statements. The provision was attached to a larger transportation and transit policy bill (HF 928), which the Governor ultimately vetoed.

The Commissioner's July 1st letter states that MnDOT will take actions similar to the vetoed legislation. This includes public postings updated monthly of all progress on the environmental impact statements and the cause of any and all schedule changes. Additionally, MnDOT will schedule public meetings to discuss the two projects and the remaining work to be done. A copy of the Commissioner's letter is attached.

"This commitment would not have been possible without the bipartisan support of our membership and legislative delegation. I particularly want to thank Rep. Terry Morrow (DFL – St. Peter), Sen. Dick Day (R – Owatonna) and Sen. Kathy Sheran (DFL – Mankato) for their tireless work on this issue, as well as the Governor and Commissioner Sorel for committing to moving this project forward."

The U.S. Highway 14 Partnership is a public-private advocacy organization supporting the four-lane expansion of Trunk Highway 14 in southern Minnesota between New Ulm, Rochester and Winona. Formed in 1998, the Highway 14 Partnership lobbies at both the state and federal levels of government.

For more information, please contact J.D. Burton at 651-225-8840 or visit the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership website at www.ushighway14.com.

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