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U.S. Highway 14 needs bonding bill

Failed bill contained nearly \$200 million for Corridors of Commerce and specifically mentioned Highway 14

St. Paul—Due to the persistent efforts of a strong bipartisan group of area legislators, the U.S. Highway 14 expansion project is at a critical juncture. During negotiations yesterday, \$199.5 million in funding for Corridors of Commerce was added to the bonding bill, and Highway 14 was specifically listed among projects eligible for this funding. However, the Legislature was unable to pass the bonding bill before last night’s deadline.

Today, U.S. Highway 14 advocates are calling on Governor Dayton to call a special session on bonding and to ensure that funding for Corridors of Commerce remains in the bill.

“This is the opportunity for Highway 14 that we’ve worked so long for — it is vital that this momentum not be lost,” said Bob Beussman, mayor of New Ulm and president of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership. “We are disappointed that this has to be resolved in a special session, but we ask the Governor and legislative leaders to reach a deal and pass a bonding bill that includes money for Highway 14.”

The Corridors of Commerce funding contained in the failed bonding bill could be used for land acquisition and planning, which is the next critical step in completing the last two sections of Highway 14 from Rochester to New Ulm. Without the funding and specific designation for Highway 14 contained in the bill, there is no current way to make progress on the project.

“The need to fix Highway 14 is one of the most critical safety and economic development issues facing our region,” continued Mayor Beussman. “Our area legislators and other advocates have been working tirelessly to obtain the funding needed to finally finish this project. We ask the Governor to take this opportunity to ‘fix ’14 now’ by calling a special session on the bonding bill.”

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