

St. Croix EDC President: Congress Must Act on River Crossing

On July 28th, the National Parks Subcommittee of U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee conducted a hearing on Senate Bill 1134 that was introduced by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota to allow the construction on the St. Croix River Crossing project. This is an important regional infrastructure project for west central Wisconsin and the eastern portion of the Twin Cities.

As president of St. Croix EDC, I was pleased to join St. Croix County Board Chair Daryl Standafer in submitting testimony for the hearing. St. Croix County has been on record numerous times with its support for this project. The county's most recent support was a resolution adopted at its January 2011 Board of Supervisors meeting. St. Croix EDC has followed the project with great interest since the National Park Service recommended that no federal permits be issued on the project in December 1996. This action effectively killed the project until the mediated stakeholder sessions commenced in mid-2003. The EDC provided written comments of support throughout the 2003-2006 stakeholder process. The work of the stakeholders led to a recommended corridor and design for a modern four-lane bridge that will connect Wisconsin and Minnesota. The U.S. Department of Transportation supported the work of the stakeholders when it issued a Record of Decision in November 2006

Throughout this project, we've seen government at its worst – meaning one agency fighting against another. With Labor Day now behind us, we anticipate seeing the federal government at its best – working together to solve a problem it is mostly responsible for creating. You see, only the federal government can act to resolve the dilemma of constructing a bridge over the wild and scenic St. Croix River. The same act that allowed the National Park Service to conduct its environmental review provides a course of action for Congress to issue a narrow exemption

to allow this project to move forward.

Senator Klobuchar's Bill, and a similar one introduced by Representative Michele Bachmann, has wide support. The governors of both Wisconsin and Minnesota, along with the two state transportation secretaries, the U.S. Senators from Wisconsin and Minnesota, and many U.S. Representatives, are lined up behind the Bills.



*Ryan Sicard, president,
St. Croix Economic
Development Corp.*

St. Croix EDC is confident Congress will choose the right course of action.

About St. Croix EDC: St. Croix EDC is a public-private business organization that operates as the independent economic development arm of St. Croix County, Wisconsin. St. Croix is a rapidly growing county located along the Wisconsin-Minnesota border. St. Croix is included in the Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington MN-WI metropolitan area. The close proximity to the Twin Cities makes St. Croix County a desirable location for business expansion, relocation, and consolidation.



This photo simulation shows an aerial view of the King Plant looking west and illustrates the proposed St. Croix River Crossing between Oak Park Heights, MN and St. Joseph, WI. Photo: Minnesota Department of Transportation