

DeKalb IL 60115
February 20, 2007

Diane O'Keefe, P.E.,
Deputy Director of Highways
Regional Engineer
Illinois Department of Transportation
District 3
700 East Norris Drive
Ottawa, Illinois 61350

Dear Ms. O'Keefe:

As a former resident of Hinckley IL (now moved to DeKalb), I have been horrified from the beginning at the ill-thought idea of Rep. Hastert to totally disregard the wishes of his constituents in the large rural/residential who are opposed to "Hastert's Folly", whose homes and farms would be totally obliterated by his terrible highway. We know how he has profited from his shady land deals there. The best farmland in IL and the most precious streams and trees would be affected. In all the years of citizens meeting against this sprawlway, Rep. Hastert never attended a single meeting or sent a representative to hear us out. There is huge public and personal opposition to this plan.

I'm thankful there's an organized effort to be heard in this regard. The meetings being held now should have been held in the very beginning, before Hastert made his grandstand play, flying overhead of hundreds of protesters at Caterpillar in Aurora to announce that this would be a wonderful highway (especially for profiteers). Most of us are heartsick with the plan.

It was very strange that Rep. Bob Pritchard, early on, wrote in his public statements that "we in DeKalb County should support this highway in Kane County -- otherwise, it might be in OUR county", (which, of course, no one would want.)

Below are some well thought-out reasons to stop this highway idea. My thoughts are from the heart -- the following are from the heads of earnest intelligent people:

1. The transportation needs of the area are diverse and these needs are best met by a diverse network of roads. Instead of spending \$1 billion on the Prairie Parkway, the state should invest in other highway

projects throughout the area, projects that will immediately benefit residents. The major projects that merit funding are the Eldmain Road expansion and bridge, providing connection to Galena Road as a western bypass for Yorkville; the Wikaduke Trail, which upgrades and connects existing roads at the eastern edge of Kendall County, connecting I-80 and I-88; and expansion and improvement of Illinois 47 between I-80 and I-88. IDOT claims that these three projects will be completed, but there are no design plans and no funding for them at this time. (Widening of the southern portion of Illinois 47 is included as part of the Prairie Parkway proposal.)

2. The environmental impact statement was biased by the preselection of the route by recording the Prairie Parkway corridor in 2002; the support of former House Speaker Hastert for the project and \$207 million in federal funding (including \$56 million for the U.S. 34 interchange which predetermined the route and access for the highway); and determination by the Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Tim Martin that the Prairie Parkway was one of three top priority transportation projects in the state – long before any needs assessment.

3. The DEIS underestimates the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the B2 and B5 alternatives on the Fox River and the Big Rock Creek watersheds, both high quality environments. Depending on the route selected, the Prairie Parkway will also have deleterious effects on either the Aux Sable Creek watershed or the Nettle Creek watershed.

4. The proposed Prairie Parkway routes would each cross streams and tributaries at least 83 times, destroy and fragment 54 to 58 acres of forests, and potentially impact 13 threatened and endangered species.

5. The draft EIS focuses on north-south transportation routes without addressing the east-west transportation needs. In fact, the building would result in the closing of 13 east-west roads. Many of the transportation needs areafor access to jobs in DuPage and Will counties to the east of the Prairie Parkway corridor, needs that would be best served by better east-west access.

6. Building the Prairie Parkway along either of the proposed

routes would trigger unmanaged growth that is inconsistent with county and municipal land use plans. This growth would destroy prime farmland and further encroach upon natural areas.

7. The DEIS underestimates or mischaracterizes the impact the Prairie Parkway would have on prime farmland. Alternative B2 impacts 2,510 acres of farmland and 170 farms. Alternative B5 impacts 2,560 acres of farmland and 189 farms. More than 60 farm would lose some structures, including either 9 or 11 farm residences, depending on the route. Further, the DEIS estimates that 4,800 to 5,400 additional acres of farmland will be lost because of development triggered by construction of the Prairie Parkway. (Page 4-117).

Please listen to Marvel Davis and the hundreds of other voices, who represent thousands of us, and reconsider the Parkway plan -- to hear the wishes of the people and preserve the land.

Yours truly,

Lolly Voss