

DRAFT

February 26, 2010

Dear Senator / Congressman:

We write requesting your leadership and support for an initiative of critical importance to the health, safety, and welfare of our mutual constituents. The transportation corridor defined by Interstate 81 is of critical importance to our nation. Approximately 12% of the Gross Domestic Product of the United States flows through this vital artery. This commerce offers our communities and citizens a myriad of economic opportunities and insulates us from the worst effects of economic downturns.

At the same time, numerous issues and challenges confront us. Principal among them are adverse safety and negative environmental impacts. We simply cannot address these challenges at the local or even state level individually. In particular, we wish to note that this is a cooperative, regional initiative by members of the Coalition, including local jurisdictions, from six states along the Corridor: New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee.

In order to collectively and comprehensively address our common concerns, the I-81 Corridor Coalition was established. The Coalition's structure and operations are modeled after the successful Interstate 95 Corridor Coalition and follows federal recommended criteria to promote integrated multi-state corridor-wide planning.

The Boards of Commissioners of the six most populous counties in the Corridor in Pennsylvania have appealed to U.S. Senators Specter and Casey to request their joint sponsorship of \$1.7 million in federal funds through the Fiscal Year 2011 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill. The funds will help support the efforts of the I-81 Coalition for a two-year period. Many local jurisdictions have committed funds and resources to this effort prior to our approaching the federal government for support.

We ask you to join in supporting the request for federal recognition and support of the I-81 Corridor Coalition. Thank you for your consideration and leadership of this critical initiative.