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Metro East
Greenways Alliance

Ders Anderson
Openlands

Tim Bartlett
Champaign County
Design & Conservation
Foundation

Ed Barsotti
League of Illinois Bicyclists

John Chambers
Tri County Regional
Planning Commission

Doug DeLille
Quad City Metro-Area
Greenway Coalition

Denise Maxwell
Illinois Trail Riders

Shawn McKinney
Illinois Mountain
Bicyclists Coalition

Gary Mechanic
Illinois Paddling Council

Wayne Mikes
International Mountain Biking
Association - Illinois

Bev Moore
Illinois Trails Conservancy

Kevin "Bud" Northrup
Illinois OHV Advisory Council

John O'Dell
Illinois Hiking Society

Joe Zeibert
Sangamon Valley Greenways &
Trails Advisory Committee

Rick Strader
Boone & Winnebago Regional
Greenways Advisory Committee



April 23, 2007

The Honorable Rod Blagojevich
Governor of Illinois
State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Blagojevich,

The Illinois Greenways and Trails Council (IGTC) is the state trails advisory board, consisting of a diverse coalition of citizen groups and public agencies working to grow and improve Illinois' network of trails. We ask you to improve IDOT's administration of the Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program (ITEP), a *federally*-funded program that is the main grant source available for trails.

Over the last few years, the state's handling of ITEP has significantly decreased money going to trails in Illinois. This deprives Illinois residents of recreation and alternative transportation opportunities while hurting Illinois' ability to compete for tourism and other economic development.

We request the following improvements to the ITEP program:

- **Be Fairer with Rescissions** – over the last three years, the state has taken a *very* disproportional amount from ITEP when Congressional rescissions of federal transportation dollars have been ordered. Change IDOT's rescission criteria and/or take steps to improve ITEP's obligation rate (in addition to the sunset clause for stalled projects). Strive for rescissions that are proportional to Congress' original authorizations and intent.
- **Annual Program** – Commit to a regular, annual ITEP program, improving on its history of unpredictable grant cycles. This benefits project planning for local agencies. Also, award engineering and construction dollars in different years – as is done with the Surface Transportation Program. This would benefit obligation rates and balances.
- **50% for Trails** – Dedicate roughly half of ITEP funds for trail and bike/pedestrian projects, per national convention and Illinois' practice before 2003. The 2006 ITEP awards included only 28% for trails and pedestrian/bike ways, despite the fact that these uses are the political driving force behind Enhancements in Congress.
- **Transparent Selection Process** – Be much more open with the grant selection process. The 2006 process was kept very secretive, compromising its credibility and fueling suspicion about political influence versus merit. Involve key citizen groups in the selection committee. Publish the results of application scoring per a well-defined technical selection criteria, prior to final selection by the committee. Other neighboring states do this. The Chicago-area CMAQ program is a great model.

We ask you and IDOT to implement these much-needed changes to the Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ed Barsotti
The Illinois Greenways and Trails Council

Cc: Senator Richard Durbin
Lt. Governor Patrick Quinn
Milton Sees, Acting Secretary, IDOT
Clayton Harris, Chief of Staff, IDOT