August 13, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As officers of the Midwest-Canada Relations Committee, we are writing to express our support for the new bridge and customs plaza/port of entry between Detroit and Windsor. A resolution supporting the New International Trade Crossing was passed by the Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC) of the Council of State Governments at our annual meeting in July 2013. The resolution is included as an attachment to this letter and remains in effect for three years from the date of passage.

The specific purpose of this letter is to request a commitment to support and staff the U.S. port of entry. As you know, the government of Canada is providing much of the funding for the bridge project, in recognition of the economic importance of a new crossing between Detroit and Windsor. The port of entry is a crucial part of this project.

When you announced your National Export Initiative several years ago, the goal was to double U.S. exports over five years. One of the ways to reach this goal is to make it easier for Canadian and U.S. companies to do business together, and this starts with expanding the busiest commercial border crossing in the U.S.

Canada and the U.S. already have the world’s largest trading relationship, and as trade continues to increase, the infrastructure must be in place to support that growth. Bilateral trade in goods between Canada and the 11 states in the Midwestern Legislative Conference exceeded $243 billion last year.

Increasingly, our two countries rely on cross-border supply chains to make things together, and this is especially true in the Midwest. A quarter of all Canada-U.S. trade in goods crosses through the Detroit-Windsor corridor, so it is important that we keep traffic moving smoothly across this important gateway.

The Midwest-Canada Relations Committee is one of the policy committees of the MLC, a nonpartisan association of state legislators from across the country. The committee was established to work cooperatively on issues that affect people and governments on both sides of the border. All state legislators from the 11 Midwestern states, as well as provincial parliamentarians from the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan, are members of the organization.

The Midwest-Canada Relations Committee supports efforts to strengthen the economies of our respective nations, provinces and states. Now that members of the International Authority that will oversee the bridge have been appointed, it seems appropriate that the U.S. should invest in the bridge and commit to supporting the port of entry.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ray Merrick, Speaker  
Kansas House of Representatives  
Committee Co-Chair

Wayne Elhard, MLA  
Saskatchewan  
Committee Co-Chair

Ed Charbonneau, State Senator  
Indiana  
Committee Co-Vice Chair

Drew Caldwell, MLA  
Manitoba  
Committee Co-Vice Chair