

February 1, 2021

The Honorable Chris Sprowls
Speaker, Florida House of Representatives
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Speaker Sprowls,

We, the undersigned business leaders from Tampa Bay, are writing you today to voice our very great concern regarding the Florida Department of Transportation proposal to delay the construction of the \$1.4 billion Westshore Interchange (known as Segment 4 of Tampa Bay NEXT) from 2024 to 2026, and the adjoining lanes to Downtown Tampa (known as Segment 5 of Tampa Bay NEXT) beyond that.

We request that you do everything in your power to restore this project, and its associated funding, to its original schedule.

The Westshore Interchange serves as the primary connection point for residents of Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties, linking the Veterans Expressway, State Road 60 and I-275. Because of this, the project has drawn the collective and unprecedented support of private, public and non-profit leaders and organizations from throughout the Tampa Bay Region, who have identified it as our region's most important transportation project.

The 2024 start date is critical, as it coincides with the completion of the new span of the Howard Frankland Bridge and the six lanes of traffic that will be coming into Hillsborough County. With the delayed start, and the scheduled completion pushed back to 2030, the region will suffer from huge transportation delays and dangerous bottlenecks that negatively impact commuters and commerce, including passenger and freight access to Tampa International Airport.

The Westshore Interchange project is already long overdue, and the current configuration of roadways already creates the most severe traffic congestion in the region. A further delay, considering the bridge construction and the expected population growth, is unacceptable.

As our community faces the difficult pandemic recovery ahead, we need to remove hurdles to our economic growth rather than self-inflict them.

We respectfully request your leadership and support in encouraging the Florida Department of Transportation to reconsider this proposed delay and find a way to restore the original start date and funding in its 2024 work plan, when new state and/or federal funds become available.

Sincerely,

Brian Auld

President
Tampa Bay Rays and Rowdies

Brian A. Butler

President & CEO
Vistra Communications

Blake Casper

CEO
Caspers Company

Robert J. Clark, Jr.

President
Tampa Steel Erecting Co.

Don DeFosset

CEO
DJD Group

David J. Dufort

Director of Corporate Service
Amgen

Scott Fink

CEO
Giant Auto Group

Melanie Fowler, PE

Vice President, Office Principal – Tampa/ Sarasota
HDR Engineering, Inc.

Mike Griffin

Senior Vice President, Market Leader
Savills, Inc.

Bobby Harris

President & CEO
BlueGrace Logistics

Tommy Inzina

CEO
BayCare

Steven Bernstein

Regional Managing Partner
Fisher Phillips

Pierre Caramazza

Head of Product and Specialty Sales
Franklin Templeton

Ravi Chari

President
HCA, West Florida Division

James T. Daly

West Florida – Regional President
Truist

Dan Doyle, Jr.

CEO
Dex Imaging

James L. Ferman, Jr.

President & CEO
Ferman Motor Car Company, Inc.

Brian Ford

Chief Operating Officer
Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Marcus Greene

St. Petersburg Market President
Truist

Steve Griggs

CEO
Tampa Bay Lightning

Richard Hume

CEO
TechData

Gordon Johnson

President
Highway Safety Devices, Inc.

Ken Jones
Chairman & CEO
Third Lake Capital

Anne Marie Lapczynski
Site Lead, North America Capability Center
Bristol-Myers Squibb

Allan S. Martin
Chairman
Atlantic Merchant Capital Investors

Carolyn Monroe
President
Old Republic National Title Insurance Company

Harold W. Mullis
President Emeritus
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Jessica Muroff
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Jim O'Connell
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Regional President, North Florida
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Amy F. Rettig
SVP, Community Engagements, Florida Site Leader
Nielsen

Timothy Schar
Tampa Market President
Truist

TJ Szelistowski
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Ron Wanek
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Stephen J. Mitchell
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Leslie M. Muma
Philanthropist
Retired CEO Fiserv Inc.

Willy Nunn
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Lou Plasencia
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Steve Raney
Chairman & CEO
Raymond James Bank

Larry Richey
Florida Managing Principal
Cushman & Wakefield

Darryl Shaw
Co-Founder and CEO
BluePearl Veterinary Partners

Jeff Vinik
Owner
Tampa Bay Lightning

Cc: The Honorable Wilton Simpson, President, Florida Senate
The Honorable Kelli Stargel, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee