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MEDIA RELEASE

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Chamber Urges All Levels of Governments to Expedite Bi-National Planning Process

In response to current announcements on the timelines for completing the Bi-National Planning Process, which is in place to bring the long-term solution to our Windsor-Detroit Border Crossing congestion issues, the Windsor & District Chamber of Commerce urges all levels of government to expedite the Bi-National Planning Process.

The Canada-U.S.-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership (Bi-National Planning Process) has produced a final Planning/Need and Feasibility (P/NF) Study Report, identifying a long-term strategy to meet the needs of the transportation network serving the border between Southeastern Michigan-Southwestern Ontario. The Partnership is proceeding with formal environmental studies on both sides of the border and has extended the regulatory time needed to complete this phase of the Bi-National Planning Process with a deadline of 2007 at the earliest. The Chamber finds the new timelines unacceptable.

It has been a longstanding position of the Chamber that the Bi-National Planning Process should be expedited, wherever possible, through intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of environmental assessments, recognizing the complex regulatory and jurisdictional requirements.

"It is distressing if portions of the Bi-National Planning Process are delayed in regulatory requirements" said Marty Komsa, Chair of the Board of Directors at the Chamber. The overall call for quick action on the Border is growing within our membership and our business community. In calling for a shortened timeline our intent is to alert policymakers to the urgency of the task and the importance of the same for our businesses.

The new timelines for the Bi-National Planning Process are unacceptable to the Chamber. The Bi-National Planning Process should be viewed as the primary mechanism with the integrity and checks and balances to produce the best conclusions for the long-term public good. At the same time, its process should not impede the need for a reasonable and finite timeline that will benefit our business community should the flow of traffic at the world's busiest border crossings exceed the current border capacity.

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