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**GROSSE ILE
BRIDGE COMPANY**

P.O. Box 24 Grosse Ile, MI 48136 (734) 675-0511

March 7, 2002



ENTERED
Office of the Secretary

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Part of
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Via Facsimile and First Class Mail

Mr. Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Room 700
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: Riverview Trenton Railroad Company, petition for an exemption from
49 U.S.C. 10901 to acquire and operate a rail line in Wayne County, MI;
STB Finance Docket No. 34040

Dear Mr. Williams:

I write to oppose the petition of Riverview Trenton Railroad Company (RTR) for an individual exemption in the above matter because of the adverse impact of RTR's proposed operation on my adjoining business as well as the communities of Riverview, Trenton and Grosse Ile, Michigan.

I am the President of Grosse Ile Bridge Company (GIBC), the immediate (north or up-river) neighbor of the property on which RTR proposes to operate a railroad and develop an intermodal terminal for rail, road and river traffic. GIBC owns and operates a toll bridge (Bridge) connecting the residential community of Grosse Ile to the mainland communities of Riverview and Trenton. Grosse Ile is a 10-1/2 square acre island populated by over 10,800 people (2000 census). Grosse Ile is a bedroom community from which the great majority of residents commute off-island to their jobs.

Virtually all commuters access the mainland by car across one of only two bridges. The Bridge, which was built by my great-grandfather and has operated continuously since it opened in 1913, is depicted in a drawing attached as Exhibit A. The Bridge connects the north portion of Grosse Ile with Riverview. A public bridge maintained by Wayne County approximately four miles to the south runs from Grosse Ile to Trenton. The Bridge is a two-lane, through-truss drawbridge with a 1,008-foot span. Also called a swing bridge, it can be opened to permit watercraft to navigate the Detroit River by rotating the span from perpendicular to the river to



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parallel. The Bridge operates under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard and pursuant to federal regulations governing vessel passage on the river. Under penalty of a \$10,000 fine, GIBC must open the Bridge on demand for commercial vessels, including barges. These openings can occur at unexpected times throughout the day and often happen during the rush hour periods of peak vehicular traffic.

As a business owner and member of the communities affected by the proposed railroad and intermodal operation, I see significant problems with RTR's plans.

RTR's proposed operation would result in considerable traffic problems. Currently, vehicular traffic can access the Bridge from the mainland by turning onto Bridge Road from West Jefferson Avenue (see Exhibit A). When the Bridge is opened to permit watercraft to proceed north or south on the Detroit River, backups can occur. Bridge Road provides a queuing area for motor vehicles off of the main thoroughfare, i.e., West Jefferson Avenue. In an advertisement placed by RTR in *The News-Herald*, the local newspaper serving Riverview and Trenton, RTR suggests that West Jefferson be relocated along the river, presumably to permit RTR greater access to a railroad right of way. That proposal would prevent queuing and instead create significant backups on West Jefferson Avenue. Curiously, that advertisement (a copy of which is attached as Exhibit B) was not published in the *Ile Camera*, the Grosse Ile local paper. More importantly, the advertisement describes RTR's operation (albeit inaccurately) as "Rail service - NOT ships." RTR subsequently has admitted it will use barges in its planned operation.

The county bridge is closed from time to time for maintenance and improvements. When that happens, the Bridge is the sole vehicular access to Grosse Ile and daily Bridge crossings can triple. The Bridge has a booth at its center where traffic stops to pay the toll. When GIBC receives adequate notice that the county bridge will be closed, it creates a temporary toll plaza on the mainland side of the Bridge to address the attendant backups and to minimize the risk of interference with West Jefferson Avenue. GIBC has received final site plan approval from the City of Riverview to construct, at significant expense, a permanent toll plaza in the same area and plans to place this project for bid. If permitted, RTR's proposed operations could prevent this much-needed improvement to the Bridge.

RTR's proposal will also lead to significant congestion and traffic interruptions. At present, rail traffic accesses RTR's facility across a trestle (which is not owned by RTR) at the south end of its property. The RTR's use of the at-grade crossing at West Jefferson Avenue at the north end of its property near the entrance to Bridge Road, however, will result in significant interference with road traffic on West Jefferson. The marked increase in truck traffic to and from the property will significantly worsen this problem. According to an August 17, 2001



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report prepared by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (a coalition of local governments that engage in joint planning and policy processes regarding issues of planning, building, maintaining and re-building the physical infrastructure of southeastern Michigan), RTR has advised that up to 300 trucks per day will be traveling through the area, i.e., one truck every two minutes (the reliability of this figure is not certain, and presumably it could be low). Moreover, that report also notes the effects on local roads: "the cost of upgrading roads will be between \$40 and \$60 million" notwithstanding "the already poor condition of the region's freeways and major roads." The rail and road congestion will be compounded by the accompanying increase in river traffic in the form of commercial vessels and barges. Thus, RTR's proposed use of trains, trucks and ships or barges through the area will result in significant and serious local problems. The combination of the increased rail, road and river traffic with RTR's proposed relocation of West Jefferson Avenue will greatly interfere with the operation of the Bridge and access to and from Grosse Ile.

GIBC respectfully proposes that these local problems and those raised by others objecting to RTR's proposed railroad and intermodal facility be considered and addressed by the communities that will be directly affected. I agree with the Hon. John D. Dingell's observation that there exist many questions regarding the impact of the RTR's proposal and ask that the Board deny the RTR's petition for exemption and permit a full review by local government of the RTR's proposed facility.

Please place this letter and any responses to it into the record.



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Sincerely,



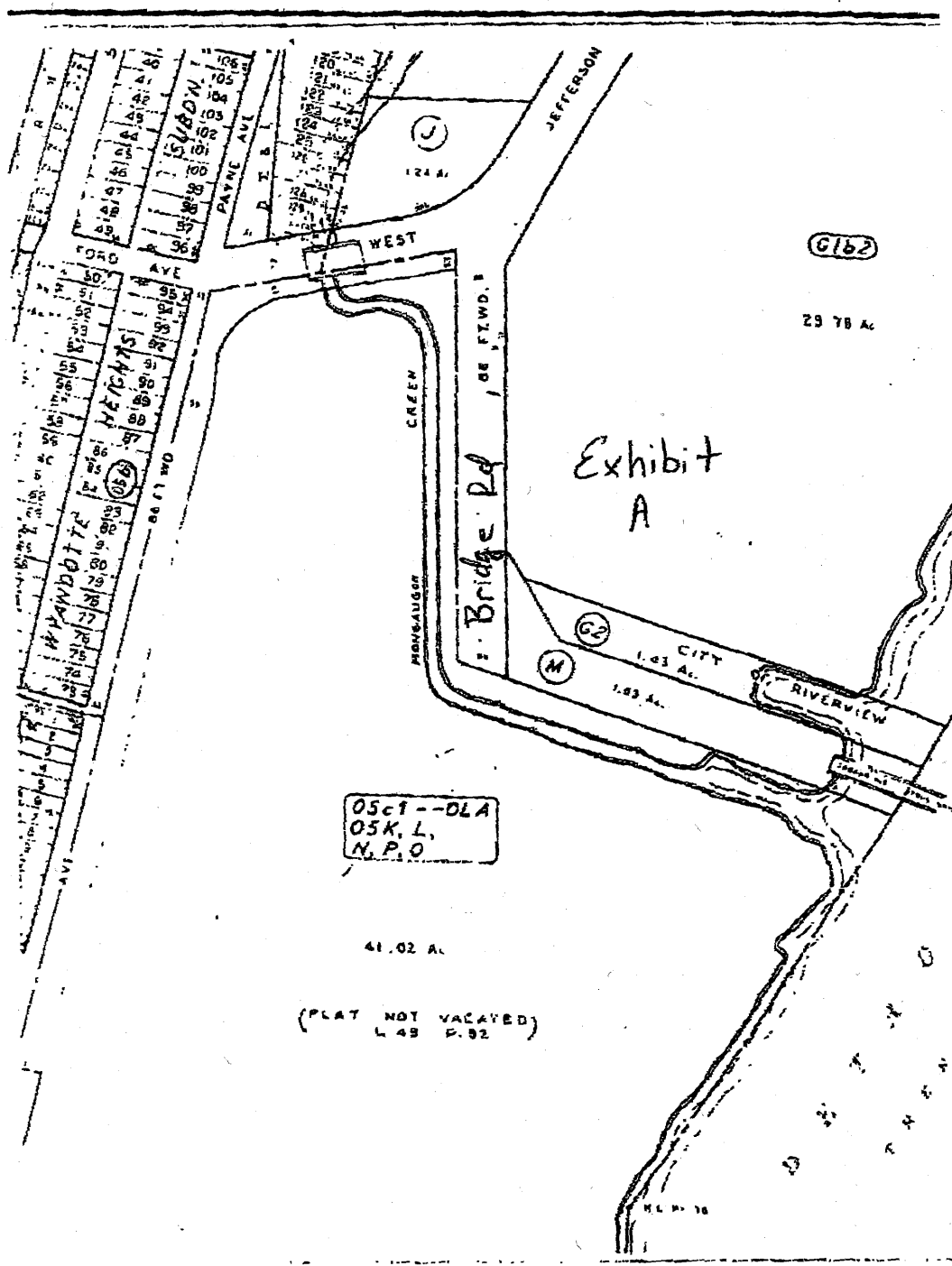
Paul J. Smoke

Enclosures

cc w/ encl.: Linda Morgan
J. William Koegel, Jr.
David H. Coburn
Richard S. Edelman
Hon. Carl M. Levin
Hon. John D. Dingell
Daniel C. Sullivan
Wallace C. Long
David A. Hirsh
Randall A. Pentiuik
Jayson J. Hall
Jonathan M. Broder
Mark J. Zausmer



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FAX NO. 2487438000

Exhibit B



An Open Letter from Riverview Trenton Railroad Company ...

It has been nearly 2 years since Riverview Trenton Railroad (RTRR) purchased a portion of the former McClouth Steel property. We have been working on a state-of-the-art transportation facility to meet the needs of our region's largest job providers. Our well-considered immediate plans have been before public agencies for quite some time and Phase I of the project has been operating for several months.

RTRR would like to set the record straight, because negative voices have distorted the true picture. While RTRR has worked with responsible local officials, incorporating their suggestions for future development, negative voices have spread LIES and FALSE RUMORS. Unsigned flyers have circulated these falsehoods and attempted to tarnish the reputation of our companies.

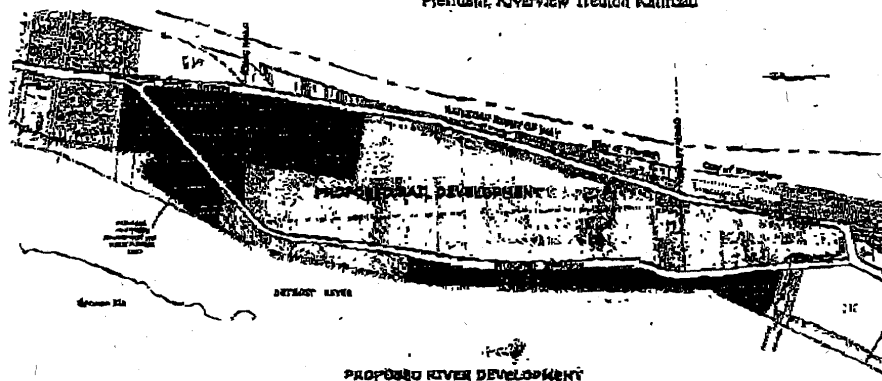
Here are the facts about the future of RTRR's development:

- Absolutely NO TRASH - none!
- Relocated Jefferson Avenue, next to parkland along the Detroit River.
- Rail service - NOT ships.
- Jobs and vital services, NOT old, idle buildings.
- \$100 Million investment, including attention to landscaping.
- Continued clean up of contaminated riverfront land.
- A practical, real business plan that is viable and timely.

Below is a conceptual rendering for the future of the RTRR initiative. It is a work in progress, incorporating the suggestions of stakeholders and we welcome continued input from citizens seeking a win-win result.

Don't be misled by "pie in the sky" trial balloons from nameless negative voices intent on distorting the truth about our proposal. RTRR's credible development offers the opportunity to get involved with a positive, attainable future. That is something our transportation company can deliver.

Sincerely,
Arnold M. Mestura
President, Riverview Trenton Railroad



Re: Riverview Trenton Railroad Company; petition for an exemption from
49 U.S.C. 10901 to acquire and operate a rail line in Wayne County, MI;
STB Finance Docket No. 34040

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on this 7th day of March, 2002, I caused copies of the attached support letter by Paul J. Smoke of the same date in response to the Surface Transportation Board's February 14, 2002 decision in STB Finance Docket No. 34040 to be served on all parties to those proceedings, by causing a copy to be delivered to each of the following by first-class mail:

J. William Koegel, Jr.
David H. Coburn
Steptoe & Johnson LLP
1330 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Richard S. Edelman
O'Donnell, Schwartz & Anderson, P.C.
1900 L Street, N.W., Suite 707
Washington, DC 20036

The Honorable Carl M. Levin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John D. Dingell
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Daniel C. Sullivan
Sullivan & Hincks
2 West 22nd Street, Suite 350
Oak Brook, IL 60523

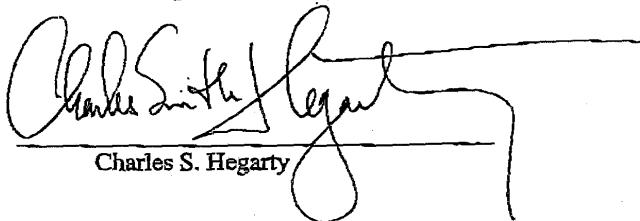
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Charles S. Hegarty