

NATIONAL STONE, SAND & GRAVEL ASSOCIATION



Natural building blocks for quality of life

September 5, 2007

The Honorable James Oberstar
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association (NSSGA) I wish to commend you for your leadership in introducing an initiative to address the nation's bridge maintenance and repair problem so tragically highlighted by the Minnesota bridge collapse. NSSGA has joined its coalition partners in campaigning for increased investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure including bridges, highways and roads, dams and ports. We support your proposal for a dedicated trust fund for bridge repair to be funded by a temporary 5 cent increase in the user fee on gasoline. This is a first step in the reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation system in 2009.

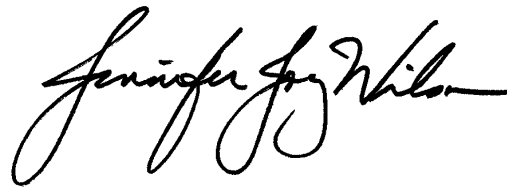
As you point out in your proposal, a key part of the problem is an aging system with over half of the bridges in the United States built before 1964. Interstate System bridges, which were primarily constructed in the 1960s, are at the end of their service lives (estimated to be 44 years for bridges built in the 1960s). NSSGA supports the four key components of your initiative including: improving bridge inspection requirements; providing dedicated funding; distributing funds based on public safety and need and prohibiting any congressional or administration earmarks; and establishing a National Highway System (NHS) Reconstruction Trust Fund.

Based near the nation's capital, NSSGA is the world's largest mining association by product volume. Its member companies represent more than 92 percent of the crushed stone and 75 percent of the sand and gravel produced annually in the U.S. and approximately 118,000 working men and women in the aggregates industry. During 2006, a total of nearly three billion metric tons of crushed stone, sand and gravel, valued at \$21 billion, were produced and sold in the United States.

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NSSGA looks forward to working with you and our coalition partners to advance the bridge initiative to improve the safety and stability of the nation's transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer Joy Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Jennifer Joy Wilson
President & CEO