



Nelson County Emergency Management

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Josh Olson, PE
Apex Engineering Group
4733 Amber Valley Parkway S
Fargo ND 58104

Dear Mr. Olson:

As Nelson County Emergency Manager, I would like to comment on the Michigan Bypass Project on US Highway 2. I have concerns regarding the proposed plan to eliminate two access points to the City of Michigan.

In particular, I am concerned about the proposal to eliminate the section of current ND Hwy 35 between South St and US Hwy 2 by the Michigan Tesoro. This access point is used for emergency response by both the Michigan Area Ambulance Service and the Michigan Fire Department. Both agencies are located on Broadway so this is their primary and quickest response route. Elimination of this access point would be detrimental to their response time. I understand that the ambulance service and fire department have also expressed their concerns for elimination of this access point, and as Emergency Manager I fully support and concur with their viewpoint.

Nelson County has identified primary evacuation routes for each of its seven incorporated cities. These pre-designated routes are listed in our Local Emergency Operations Plan in the Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place Annex. The pre-designated routes for Michigan City are US Hwy 2 using the east and west access points, State Hwy 35 and County Road 35. Because of the high volume of hazardous materials being transported on US Hwy 2, as well as all the crude oil transported by rail every day through the center of the city, great potential exists for the possibility of evacuation brought about by an accident and/or spill. Two less evacuation points for the City of Michigan could someday prove to be a deadly mistake. If a hazmat spill occurred at or near the west access point, for example, emergency personnel would only have one access point on the east to use for evacuating personnel out and for directing mutual aid response personnel in.

The Department of Transportation has not provided figures on cost analysis, or given information on safety or accident history analysis, or the cost of removing access points. I believe more in-depth information needs to be provided and everything looked at very carefully before closing any of the access points in the City of Michigan.

For the safety of the residents of Nelson County, I urge you to keep all four of the existing access points to the City of Michigan, and make the necessary improvements to maintain safety. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sharon Young,
Nelson County Emergency Manager