



RODNEY ELLIS
COMMISSIONER

October 20, 2020

J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman, Texas Transportation Commission
125 E. 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairman Bugg:

I am requesting that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) grant a 120-day extension to the comment period for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the \$7 billion North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). As mentioned in our previous letter regarding the FEIS, our office's capacity to adequately respond and the community's ability to provide substantive feedback have been drastically impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, once the FEIS is posted to the Federal Register, there is a minimum required 30-day waiting period before a record-of-decision. This does not give an adequate amount of time for our offices, County leadership, local organizations or the general public, to properly review the 8,189 pages the FEIS is comprised of. Fighting the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about difficulties in our offices ability to sufficiently review the FEIS, this brings great concern for the public's own ability to provide a proper evaluation and substantive feedback while operating under the same constraints.

For months I have been receiving the feedback of those directly affected by the NHHIP expansion. In this time I have learned of how devastating this multi-billion dollar project will be for the communities of color and low-income residents immediately adjacent to the project. Without providing suitable time for their review and input on the FEIS we will be continuing a history of regional transportation projects which continue to give little regard to the vulnerable communities they most heavily affect.

This is why I am requesting a 120-day extension to the FEIS comment period. In doing so local representatives, community advocates, business owners, and residents all have the ability to adequately voice their concerns on a project which will directly impact their lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rodney Ellis
Harris County Commissioner, Precinct One

Cc: Commissioner Alvin New
Commissioner Laura Ryan

Commissioner Robert C. Vaughn
James M. Bass, Executive Director, Texas Department of Transportation
Eliza Paul, District Engineer – Houston, Texas Department of Transportation

1001 Preston Avenue, Suite 950 • Houston, Texas 77002 • (713) 274-1000
El Rio Service Center • 7901 El Rio Street • Houston, Texas 77054 • (713) 991-6881