

Is the tail wagging the dog on the Illiana toll road proposal? Is this good public policy or should Northwest Indiana instead work for a sustainable future, better for everyone and less yoked to fossil fuel?

Just what is the connection between controversial Texas toll roads, Macquarie (co-owner of the Indiana toll road and Chicago Skyway), and Governor Mitch Daniels, formerly of the Bush administration? Macquarie has recent division director, David James Gribbin IV, revolving in and out of the Bush administration. Unsurprisingly, the new highway bill and the Bush administration encourage public private toll roads.

There's no secret about expanding the Illiana toll road plan east of I-65 and LaPorte mayor Leigh Morris's plans for intermodal yards for train to truck transfer of freight that would dump huge amounts of truck traffic on our roads.

What is the connection between Governor Daniels and a local billionaire buying many properties in Cedar Lake? Is this arrangement similar to the attempt to put a private hotel/conference center on the lakefront at Indiana Dunes State Park? Might large campaign donations have something to do with both?

Is there a connection between politicians with campaigns supported by developers and support for the Illiana and all the sprawl development it will fast track? The region's development mode will be stuck in sprawl if the toll road corporation needs it to provide toll payers.

Wouldn't this unsustainable infrastructure ruin our competitive position with more progressive regions when gas is \$10/gallon? Suburban sprawl is expensive and heavily subsidized by cheap fossil fuel, federal, state, and local taxpayers, as well as payers of utility bills. Sprawl hurts most the communities left behind. They lose jobs and investment, and become the region's only "affordable housing" location.

Will the Regional Development Authority, charged with expanding public transit with commuter rail to Valparaiso and Lowell and the Regional Bus Authority, developing the Gary Chicago airport and the Marquette Greenway plan for regional revitalization, act contrary to its mission if offered cash by a toll road deal? Public transit needs compact development, smart growth, instead of sprawl to be successful. Sprawl drains the regional economy. Furthermore, the Illiana favors the Peotone airport at the expense of Gary's.

The Indiana Senate approved Governor Daniel's public private partnership toll road bill just days after public meetings showing major opposition. We hope the House of Representatives can get see through private interests boosting the Illiana and the possibility of more "bribe" money. They should know the ill effects of new roads on sprawl and congestion, the regional economy, and social justice when they take the bill up on March 6. Please do some research and contact your state representative today. Check www.hoosier.sierraclub.org/dunelands/ for more info.

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