Testimony by William Storves, Ford Motor Company
before the Michigan House Transportation Committee regarding
Public Private Partnerships – HB 4961
April 29, 2010

Business Case

Michigan and Ontario are central to Ford's international competitiveness.

- In Michigan, Ford employs more than 38,000 people and has 16 major manufacturing facilities
- In Ontario, Ford employs about 7,300 employees and has 5 major manufacturing facilities

The combination of these centers of economic growth produces the F150, Mustang, Edge and Focus – and engines powering a full range of Ford, Lincoln and Mercury products.

This economic engine also results in the border crossing playing a key role in Ford's business operations -- on a typical day, 600 trucks carrying a full range of components, engines and completed vehicles cross the border between Ontario and Michigan.

Anything that improves the flow of goods across the border will help to improve our business -- which is critical in today's intensely competitive marketplace.

If anything were to happen to stop or disrupt traffic for any extended period of time on the current Ambassador Bridge, the economic effects for Ford, our suppliers and the hundreds of other businesses that depend on the crossing, would be devastating. The economic effects on Michigan and the region would be disastrous.

Regional Impact

The importance of the crossing to Ford is a mirror image of the importance to the region.

Simply put, the Detroit-Windsor border is the busiest trade corridor in the world.

The Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, report an estimated U.S. $1.2 billion in trade crosses the U.S.-Canada border daily - over 40% of it at the five international, land-border crossings in the Detroit-Windsor Region. Of this daily trade, as much as U.S. $234 million is automotive related.

A region competing in the global market has to make the best use of every unique advantage it has. Michigan's location on the U.S.-Canada border certainly qualifies as a unique advantage.

I understand the hesitance of some who look at current crossing traffic and see it is lower than it was before 9-11 or before the recession. But we should not be planning State's future on the current economic conditions. A major project, like an international bridge, takes years to build. A traffic study, released earlier this month, shows truck traffic across the Ambassador Bridge up more than 21% or 1,000 trucks a day over the same period last year.

Today, as we look forward to putting the worst US recession since the Great Depression behind us, an improved border crossing can prove to be a major catalyst to a strong economy and a resurgent auto industry.

On behalf of Ford Motor Company, I strongly encourage your support for the P3 legislation that will allow the Detroit River International Crossing project to move forward.