OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN **NEWS**

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U.S. Department of Transportation Gives Final Approval for Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project

'Move Illinois' Project will Reduce Traffic Congestion, Create 65,000 New Jobs by 2040

CHICAGO – January 24, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn and the Illinois Tollway today announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation has approved the final agreement that will allow the Illinois Tollway to construct the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project. This sign off completes the last step in the federal review and approval process.

At the direction of Governor Quinn, the Illinois Tollway and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) have been working with federal officials to secure the final authorization for the $3.4 billion project as part of the Illinois Tollway's 15-year, $12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*. The project will boost long-term economic development in northeastern Illinois and provide congestion relief that is projected to save drivers $145 million a year in time and fuel costs.

"This critical step towards construction of the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project is a testament to the strong support from Illinois to Washington D.C. to improve mobility throughout the region," Governor Pat Quinn said. "I spoke with Secretary LaHood last night about the tremendous economic benefits that will result from this project, which will put thousands of Illinois men and women to work."

The Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project has been in the works for decades and is considered a "Project of National and Regional Significance" by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"I am pleased that we found a solution, so that when built, this project can provide mobility for the people of Illinois for generations to come," said U.S Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. "I look forward to continuing to work with Governor Quinn on this critical project."

"With this milestone, Illinois is well-positioned to implement this historic project, setting the stage for economic growth for decades to come," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur.

The Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project will include construction of a new, all-electronic toll road around the western border of O'Hare International Airport linking the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), the extension of the Elgin O'Hare Expressway east along Thorndale Avenue to O'Hare and the rehabilitation and widening of the existing Elgin O'Hare Expressway. The project is also expected to create as many as 65,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2040 when combined with completion of the western terminal at O'Hare Airport.

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"The quick federal approval for this critically important project is a testament to the leadership of Governor Quinn and the close partnership of the Illinois Tollway and IDOT," said IDOT Secretary Ann Schneider. "It will create thousands of good jobs, strengthen the state's position as the transportation hub for the nation and lay the foundation for the continued long-term economic development of northeastern Illinois."

The Tollway is planning to spend $95.6 million in 2013 for work on the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project. Potential 2013 construction includes noise walls along the existing Elgin O'Hare Expressway, Rohlwing Road (Illinois Route 53) grade separation and the southbound Elmhurst Road over I-90 bridge. The actual location and schedule of construction will depend on land acquisition, permits, agreements and utility relocations.

The 2013-2025 implementation plan is broadly supported by local governments and represents a fiscally responsible approach to address the area's diverse travel needs - improving travel efficiency, providing western access to O'Hare, enhancing multi-modal connections and reducing congestion.

About Move Illinois

The Illinois Tollway's $12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, will improve mobility, relieve congestion, reduce pollution, create as many as 120,000 jobs and link economies across the Midwest region. Move Illinois will address the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system; rebuild and widen the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor; construct a new interchange to connect the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57; build a new, all-electronic Elgin O'Hare Western Access and fund planning studies for the Illinois Route 53/120 Extension and the Illiana Expressway.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).

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