FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2012

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD BEGINS ON ELGIN O'HARE WEST BYPASS PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Hearing scheduled April 18 for public to review project documents, ask questions and share views

CHICAGO, IL – Public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Project (EOWB) will be accepted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Illinois Tollway from March 30 to May 14, 2012. The Draft EIS and other materials will be available for review during an April 18 public hearing and are also available at municipal buildings and local public libraries located in the project area and on the EOWB Project website at www.elginohare-westbypass.org.

Earlier this month, Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann Schneider and Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur signed the Draft EIS, a major milestone for the project. Officials from the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Highway Administration have also signed the Draft EIS. The completion of the Draft EIS moves the project another step closer to construction.

"The input we have been receiving from all of the key stakeholders has been critical to reaching this next important step to building the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass," said Secretary Schneider. "This project is a priority of Governor Quinn's administration for its ability to create jobs, promote economic development and improve transportation. We look forward to additional feedback from the public."

"Over the past year, together, we've made more progress to move the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Project forward than has been made over the last 20 years," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "The 2013-2025 Initial Construction Plan featured in the Draft EIS is broadly supported by local governments and represents a fiscally responsible approach for addressing the area's diverse travel needs - improving travel efficiency, western access to O'Hare, multi-modal connections and reducing congestion."

IDOT is leading the effort to complete the EIS and receive a Record of Decision from the U.S. Department of Transportation by the end of 2012. Once the Record of Decision is in place, the Illinois Tollway can begin construction of the EOWB. Last August, the Illinois Tollway Board of Directors adopted the 15-year, $12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, which commits $3.1 billion toward the $3.4 billion needed to begin building the EOWB as soon as 2013.

Public Hearing Scheduled April 18, 2012

A public hearing on the Draft EIS will be held on April 18, 2012, allowing the public to review and comment on the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS documents the need for long-term transportation solutions in the corridor and assesses in detail the benefits and impacts of the project. The public hearing will be held:

Date: Wednesday, April 18, 2012
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Location: Belvedere Banquets
1170 W. Devon Avenue
Elk Grove Village

The public is invited and encouraged to attend to review the Draft EIS, ask questions and share their views on the EOWB Project, its environmental impacts and proposed mitigation strategies. Representatives from IDOT and the Illinois Tollway will be available to answer questions, and the public is encouraged to provide verbal or written testimony that will be included as part of the public record.

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About the Illinois Department of Transportation
The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has responsibility for planning, construction and maintenance of Illinois' extensive transportation network, which encompasses, highways and bridges, airports, public transit, rail freight and rail passenger systems. It operates with an annual budget of approximately $5 billion.

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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