



Political Influencers across Texas Strongly Support Abbott's Non-toll Plan for I-35 Expansion through Downtown Austin

Chairman Bruce Bugg
Texas Transportation Commission | Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

March 23, 2020

Chairman Bugg:

The Texas Transportation Commission is scheduled to adopt its new Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) in April, and as such, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has finally proposed a [non-toll plan to expand I-35](#) through downtown Austin from 290 E to 290 W/71. **We applaud this action and wholeheartedly ask the Commission to move forward with adopting this non-toll plan at its April Commission meeting.** The I-35 project will address 12 of the most congested stretches of roadway in Texas, including the second most congested highway according to the [100 Most Congested Roads List](#).¹

Governor Greg Abbott promised to fix Texas roads without raising taxes, fees, debt or tolls. **This project does exactly what the Governor promised — fix our roads without new tolls, fees, or debt.** The Governor's commitment to addressing congestion was the impetus behind him launching the Texas Clear Lanes initiative in 2015, which later included prioritizing Proposition 1 & 7 funds for congestion relief projects.

In 2014, the 21 counties along I-35 encompassed almost 40 percent of the Texas population and over 40 percent of Texas jobs, according to the Texas Clear Lanes Initiative. In fact, two-thirds of the state's population



Texas Eagle Forum



lives within the 30 most congested U.S. metropolitan areas.² Alleviating congestion along I-35 has both statewide and international importance. **We commend the Governor and his Transportation Commission for prioritizing this project without increasing the tax burden on Texas residents.**

In the past, we shared our concerns that the vast majority of Prop 1 and Prop 7 funds were NOT allocated to the 100 Most Congested Roads **as the Governor's Texas Clear Lanes Initiative promised.** We're thrilled to see that big congestion relief projects like I-35 in Austin are finally getting the attention and funding desperately needed to get Texans moving again.

Regardless which of the many buckets of transportation funds from which the I-35 project is funded, **making good on the Governor's Texas Clear Lanes Initiative without new taxes, more debt and tolls is essential to gain the trust of citizens who frankly are just as weary of excuse-making as much as they are weary of traffic congestion.**

According to the 2016 Sunset Staff Report on TxDOT (page 22), "As currently structured, TxDOT's project development process is not meeting expectations and is not prepared to effectively handle the influx of new transportation funding projected to double over the next decade. **TxDOT has not met key on-time or on-budget measures for several years,** indicating underlying problems with the department's management of its project portfolio through complex steps including environmental review, design, and right-of-way acquisition."

It would be refreshing if this I-35 project could demonstrate progress and stand out as a project where TxDOT demonstrates it can deliver a large scale project on-time and on-budget with an efficient design that truly alleviates congestion for all Texas drivers (unlike toll projects and managed lanes where only those who can pay more or fulfill an arbitrary special status like carpooling get any modicum of traffic relief).

We urgently ask the Commission to advance the expansion of this vital corridor non-toll – as Governor Abbott promised voters. Under no circumstances should the Commission vote to approve this project in the UTP as a toll project in hopes of a new legislature voting to re-authorize a Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA - AKA public private partnership) as some special interests are lobbying hard to do. Grassroots Texans have fought vehemently against re-authorization of such controversial financing methods that result in not only a loss of control over our vital public highways, but also in toll rates that exceed \$3/mile in peak hours as is the case on the privately-operated North Tarrant Express.³ **Texans do not want nor can they afford such Cadillac toll lanes in these 50-year deals.**

Let's work together to get our roads expanded, bottlenecks alleviated, and our roadways operating in the most efficient manner to maximize the capacity and improve the mobility of every Texas driver.



Sincerely, the undersigned grassroots political influencers, *

Terri Hall, Founder/Director, Texas TURF; Texans for Toll-free Highways

JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director, Grassroots America - We the People

Cathie Adams, First VP, Eagle Forum, Former Chairman, Republican Party of Texas, SD 8

Bill Aiken, Advance Team, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Karen Albright, past President, Freestone County TEA Party

Sam Anderson, Precinct Chair, Denton County Republican Party; Events Coordinator, Flower Mound Area Republican Club, SD 12

LaDaune Ashley, Precinct Chair, Brazoria County GOP, SD 11

Russ Bafford, Sr., past President, Robson Ranch Republican Club, SD 12

Deborah Bailey, past Secretary, San Angelo TEA Party, SD 28

Brett Baldwin, Precinct Chairman, Collin County Republican Party, SD 8

Dottie Barnes, Co-Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County, SD 22

Jim Barnes, President, McAllen/Hidalgo County TEA Party; Valley Conservative Newsletter Editor, SD 20

Anna Bartosh, Treasurer, San Angelo TEA Party; Legislative Chair, San Angelo Republican Women, SD 28

Annette Bennett, Precinct Chair, Gillespie County Republican Party, Fredericksburg Tea Party, SD 24

Beth Biesel, Forum Chief, American Liberty Forum, SD 16

Bill Bingham, Board Member, Bryan/College Station Tea Party; former Precinct Chair Brazos County Republican Party, SD 5

Suzanne Blackstone, past President, Golden Corridor Republican Women; Plano Citizens' Coalition, SD 12

Tammy Blair, past Chairman, Cherokee County Republican Party, Board Member, East Texans for Liberty, SD 1

Larry Bowman, Precinct Chair, Wood County Republican Party, SD 1

Jill Bridges, Precinct Chair, Denton County Republican Party, SD 12

Janie Brittain, Steering Committee Member, Garland Tea Party, SD 16

K.C. Broyles, Vice President, Clear Lake Tea Party, SD 11



¹ [100 Most Congested Roads List 2019](#). Urban Mobility Report, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, November 2019.

² [I-35 Statewide Corridor Plan: A Path to 2040](#). Transportation Planning & Programming Division, Texas Department of Transportation, October 2016.

³ Dickson, Gordon, "On this Texas toll road, drivers want to know why they're paying \$15 for just 5 miles," Ft. Worth Star-Telegram, April 23, 2019, <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/traffic/honkin-mad-blog/article229371274.html>

Dennis Cable, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party; past SREC, SD 1

Arthur Cameron, former Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party; Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

David Carter, Central Texas TEA Party; local John Birch Society, SD 24

Janice Carter, Chapter Leader, John Birch Society, SD 24

Mary Joe Cason, Kaufman Conservative Activists, SD 2

Cindi Castilla, President, Texas Eagle Forum, SD 16

Della Clark, Member, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Ernie Clark, past President, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Dr. Dwayne "Doc" Collins, Founder & Chairman, Edom TEA Party, SD 2

Mark Coppock, Board Member/Organizer, Bryan/College Station Tea Party; Precinct Chair, Brazos County Republican Party, SD 5

Craig Cosgray, President, Highland Lakes Tea Party, SD 24

Michelle McWilliams Davis, District Captain, Convention of States; 2018 Delegate, Republican Party of Texas Convention, SD 11

Mike Deaton, former Organizer, McKinney Tea Party, SD 8

John Dillard, past Chair, Denton County Republican Party; Denton County Conservative Coalition, SD 12

Don Dixon, Longtime transportation reform activist & blogger, SD 25

Carol Doucet, Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County & Navarro County TEA Party, SD 22

Trevor Dupuy, Founder & Coordinator, Horseshoe Bay Conservative Caucus, SD 24

Sheri Edwards, Precinct Chairman, Brazoria County Republican Party, SD 11

William Ely, Director, Cypress Texas Tea Party; State Coalition Director, Convention of States, SD 7

Sharon Emmert, self-retired Smith County Commissioner, Charter Member, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Maria Espinoza, Co-Founder & National Director, The Remembrance Project, SD 17

Sue Evenwel, SREC, Senate District 1; Chair, Titus County Republican Party, SD 1

Toni & Tom Fabry, Chairman & Treasurer, Frisco TEA Party, SD 12

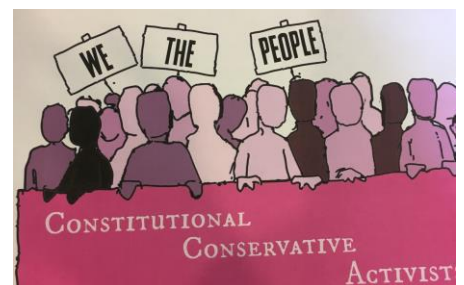
Chris Fails, Advisor, Young Conservatives of Texas; former Mayor, Hollywood Park, SD 25

Dave & Mary Fallert, Kaufman County Republican Party, SD 2

Davis Ford, Vice President, Central Texas TEA Party, SD 24



COME AND TAKE IT
EDOM TEA PARTY



Rebecca Forest, President, Women on the Wall, SD 24

Rena & David French, Founder Patriot Members, Grassroots America – We the People, SD 3

Pat Fry, Fredericksburg Tea Party, SD 24

Bill & Patty Gallagher, Principal, Primadata Liberty Center, SD 2

Alejandro Gauna, Co-Founder, Texas Minority Coalition, SD 1

Gary Gentz, Precinct Chair, Henderson County Republican Party; Member, Henderson County Tea Party, SD 3

Mike Giles, Treasurer, McKinney Tea Party; Founder, Grassroots McKinney; Board Member, Hispanic Republican Club of North TX, SD 8

Bob Green, Precinct Chair, Travis County Republican Party, SD 14

Suzette Griffin, Board Member, Clear Lake TEA Party; President, Pearland Tea Party, SD 11

Suzanne Guggenheim, President, Coastal Bend Tea Party; President, Coastal Bend Republicans, SD 20

Sharon Guthrie, former Secretary and active Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, SD 1

Barbara Harless, Co-Founder, North Texas Citizens Lobby, SD 8

Joe Harrison, Founder & Organizer, Cass County Patriots, SD 1

Carole Haynes, Ph.D., Founder, American Citizens Matter, SD 12

Marty Hiles, President, Texas Concerned Citizens, SD 22

Cara Hill, Member, Smith County Republican Women; GAWTP, SD 1

Beth Hollingsworth, Lone Star Coalition SD 2; Red Texas Forum, SD 2

Greg Holton, Regional Captain, Convention of States Action, SD 12

Mary & Dale Huls, former Secretary & President, Clear Lake TEA Party, SD 11

Lola Hurt, Precinct Chair, Dallas County Republican Party; Program Director, Dallas Eagle Forum, SD 16

Bill Hussey, Founder & Board Member, Llano TEA Party, SD 24

Rick Jackson, Precinct Chair, Kaufman County Republican Party; Vice Chairman, Lonestar Coalition, SD 2

Troy Jackson, PhD., President, Southwest Dallas County Republicans, SD 23

Hannah Jones, Canton Activists, SD 2

Sharon Jones, Secretary, Denton County Conservative Coalition, VP Legacy Republican Club, SD 12

Jeanette Rhodes Kalk, Treasurer and Board Member, San Antonio TEA Party, SD 25



Robert Kecseg, SREC SD 1; Precinct Chair, Wood County Republican Party, SD 1

Jackie King, Co-founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County, SD 22

Michael Kinzie, Founder, TEAParty911.com, SD 7

Larry Korkmas, President, Texans for Immigration Reduction and Enforcement (TFIRE), SD 17

Craig Licciardi, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party; Board Member, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Ann Lieber, Precinct Chair, Collin County Republican Party, SD 30

Matt Long, President, Fredericksburg TEA Party of Texas, SD 24

Dr. Ivette Lozano, President, Dallas County Republican Assembly, SD 2

Susan Lucas, Board Member, Bryan/College Station Tea Party, SD 5

Terry Lynch, past President, Park Cities Republican Women, SD 8

John Marler, Speaker, Agenda 21-2030, SD 5

Karen Marsalis, past President, Panola County Republican Women; past President, Panola County Conservatives, SD 1

Carroll Maxwell, Past President, Collin County Conservative Republicans, SD 8

Beth Maynard, Precinct Chair, Eastland County Republican Party, SD 28

Kevin McCall, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party; Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Julie McCarty, CEO, True Texas Project, SD 12

Ronda McCauley, Precinct Chair, Williamson County Republican Party; Moderator, Texans4Truth, SD 5

Gloria McDonald, Technology Chair, Denton County Conservative Coalition; Precinct Chair, Denton County Republican Party, SD 12

Lt. Chris McDonald, SREC SD 6, SD 6

Dana McKelvain, Precinct Chair, Stephens County Republican Party; Board Member, Tea Party Patriots of Eastland County, SD 28

Carol Meyer, Gregg Co. Republican Club; East Texans for Liberty, SD 1

Darren Meyer, Board Member, Collin Strong, SD 8

Karen Miller, Georgetown, SD 5

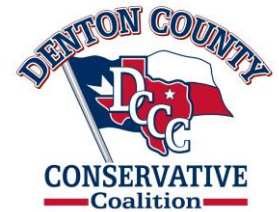
Dr. Royce Mitchell, Precinct Chair, Brazoria County GOP, SD 11

Jennifer Montgomery, Precinct Chair, Denton County GOP, SD 12

Thomas Morgan, Member, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Joe Murphy, Steering Committee, Fredericksburg Tea Party, SD 24

Ray Myers, Co-Chair, Lone Star Coalition, SD 2



Brian Newman, President, Collin Strong, SD 8

Laura Oakley, Founder/President, Grapevine Republican Club, SD 12

Ashton Oravetz III, past Chairman, Smith County Republican Party; past Board Member, GAWTP, SD 1

Dr. Sheila Page, President, Texas Chapter - American Association of Physicians and Surgeons, SD 30

Tillie Perkins, President, RED Texas Forum; Co-Chair, Lone Star Coalition, SD 2

Marian Phillips, former SREC SD 23; Election Judge, Hill County Republican Party, SD 22

Peggy Plumlee, Member, Wood County Republican Party, SD 1

Kathy Ponce, Founder & President, Freedom Tea Party Patriots; Precinct Chair, Ellis County Republican Party, SD 22

Laura Pressley, Ph.D., Founder, True Texas Elections, SD 5

Terry & Joy Putnam, Texans 4 Truth, SD 5

Eugene Ralph Sr, Vice President, SW Dallas County Republicans, SD 2

Deborah Ramsey, Chairwoman, Morris County Republican Party, SD 1

Mark Ramsey, SREC SD 7; Chair, SREC Legislative Priorities Committee

David Rasco, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, SD 1

Fran Rhodes, President, True Texas Project, SD 9

Marty Rhymes, past President, Republican Club of Gregg County; PAC Treasurer, East Texans for Liberty, SD 1

Laura Richter, 2018 Delegate, Republican Party of Texas Convention; Lone Star Coalition SD 2; Red Texas Forum, SD 2

Kathi-Ann Rivard, Precinct Chair, Collin County Republican Party, Golden Corridor Republican Women, Frisco Tea Party, SD 30

Tanya Robertson, SREC, SD 11, Board Member, Clear Lake Tea Party

Kat Rowoldt, Publisher/Owner, Christian Reporter News; Precinct Chair, Tom Green County Republican Party, SD 28

Ruben Salinas, Roanoke Conservative Activists, SD 12

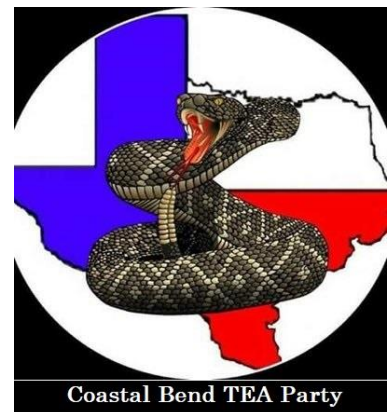
Sudie Sartor, Treasurer, Texans United for Reform and Freedom (TURF), SD 25

Josie D Schoolcraft, 2nd Vice President, Cherokee County Texas Republican Club; Precinct Chair, Cherokee County Republican Party, SD 3

Derek Shoobridge, Brazoria County Republican Party, Liverpool, SD 11

Jack Short, Events & Advance Team Leader, Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1

Cypress Texas TEA PARTY



Vicki Slaton, Former (term limited) SREC SD 2; RED Texas Forum, SD 2
Alan Smith, Steering Committee, Fredericksburg Tea Party, SD 24
Mary Smith, Concerned Women for America/TX, SD 10
Mike Smith, Central Texas TEA Party, SD 22
Murray Smith, past Secretary, Cherokee County Republican Party, SD 3
Jim Speiran, Past Board Member, Grassroots America - We the People; Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, SD 1
Jim Stanley, Chairman, Henderson County Tea Party, SD 3
Barb Stauffer, Steering Committee Member, Garland Tea Party, SD 16
Heather Stoner, Board Member, Grassroots America - We the People, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, SD 1
Penny Story, Founder, Constitutional Conservative Activists, SD 22
Conrad Striegl, Administrator, Hill Country Republican Coalition, SD 24
Mike Sweeney, Central Texas Tea Party, SD 5
Elizabeth Theiss, President, Stop the Magnet, SD 15
Jim Thompson, Conservative Grassroots Coalition SD 2; former Hopkins County Treasurer, SD 2
Pat Tibbs, President, Montgomery County TEA Party PAC, SD 4
Bela Toth, Board Member, Pearland Tea Party; Pearland Area Republican Club, SD 11
Mildred Toth, Board Member, Pearland Tea Party; Pearland Area Republican Club, SD 11
John & Lynne Tweedell, Coordinators, Convention of the States Project, SD 1
Tracy Vincent, Board Member, Gregg County Republican Club, SD 1
Karl Voigtsberger, former SREC SD 8, SD 8
Terry Wade, President, Collin County Conservative Republicans, SD 8
Kathy Wakeman, Precinct Chair, Wood County Republican Party, SD 1
SFC Walter West II (RET), SREC SD 4
Joe & Diana Winningham, Llano TEA Party, SD 24
Maggie & Carroll Wright, Founding member & past President, Texas Patriots TEA Party, SD 22
Karen Wylie, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party; Grassroots America - We the People, SD 1
Ruth York, Vice President, Tea Party Patriots of Eastland County, SD 28
Pastor Greg Young, Nationally Syndicated Radio host, Chosen Generation Radio, SD 24

Signers represent 164 individual political influencers, representing 133 unique groups and districts across Texas



Cass County Patriots



Red Texas Forum - Dallas



***Coalition signatures have organizational listings for identification purposes only**

**CC: The Honorable Governor Greg Abbott
The Honorable Lt. Governor Dan Patrick
Texas House Speaker Dennis Bonnen
Members of the Senate Transportation Committee
Members of the House Transportation Committee**



**The Texas Conservative
Grassroots Coalition is the
premier project of
Grassroots America
We the People PAC.**

**Paid for by
Grassroots America
We the People PAC.**

***Organizations listed for
identification purposes only.**