



Contact:
Alamo RMA Community Relations
210.495.5256

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Alamo RMA statement on Environmental Process for US 281

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(SAN ANTONIO) – October 24, 2008 – The Alamo RMA has released the following statement regarding the latest allegations made by anti-toll groups in Bexar County:

“On October 1, 2008, with the withdrawal of environmental clearance for any improvements to US 281, all work and projects designed to bring relief to the community also stopped. To suggest that relief can move forward without environmental clearance ignores federal law, ignores the need to protect the environment, and ignores the reality of what has happened.

“While there were previous clearances on this corridor, no such clearance exists today. Without an environmental study in place, and without a current environmental clearance, no project can move forward. The first lawsuit filed by AQUA and People for Efficient Transportation challenged the environmental clearances which were done on segments of the corridor to get the 2002-2005 project in place. Today, they are calling for a return to plans that three years ago they sued to stop.

“Overpasses only, without additional lanes, raise too many safety concerns, as cited by the Federal Highway Administration in the most recent Environmental Assessment.

“The question of toll or non toll is a financing matter, and it will be examined as to potential impacts as part of the environmental impact statement which the Alamo RMA will be leading to bring relief to our community.

“Instead of falsely raising the hopes of the community, the Alamo RMA is being very honest in saying that without a new environmental clearance, without obeying and following federal law, no new capacity can be added to the 281 North corridor.

“Today’s actions and the ongoing rhetoric by the opposition groups also fly in the face of their prior requests that an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for this project. We agree that an EIS is the proper way to go, and it is the reason why the Alamo RMA is actively pursuing this comprehensive detailed study.

“The Alamo RMA is committed to being a proactive partner in our community but the time for rhetoric should be behind us. We have three years of study ahead of us to complete the needed EIS for this corridor. Until that study is complete, and the Federal Highway Administration has rendered an opinion, no new capacity can be placed on the 281 North Corridor. To say otherwise is simply to ignore the reality and rule of law.”

About the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority

Overseen by a seven-member Board of Directors, the Alamo RMA includes a professional staff and consultant team that are committed to finding ways to empower our local community to take charge of our transportation future. The purpose of the Alamo RMA is to provide Bexar County with opportunities to accelerate needed transportation projects - through the direction of a local board making local choices about local mobility needs - that enhance the quality of life and economic growth for all residents in our region.

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