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TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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Gov. Andy Beshear Announces Kentucky, Indiana Applying for \$632.3 Million Federal Grant to Advance Interstate 69 Ohio River Crossing Bi-State Mega Project
'Completing the crossing' critical for safety, connectivity, economic competitiveness

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 21, 2023) – Gov. Andy Beshear today announced that Kentucky and Indiana are jointly applying for a \$632.3 million federal grant for the Interstate 69 Ohio River Crossing project at Henderson, Kentucky, and Evansville, Indiana.

"Our administration has pledged to seek and compete for every available federal dollar for this much anticipated and long-needed project. This application, in concert with our partners at the Indiana Department of Transportation, follows through on that pledge," Gov. Beshear said.

"Completing the crossing is critical for connectivity, safety and the competitiveness of our economies. But its importance extends far beyond this region, and that makes it worthy of significant federal funding. It's important nationally because the crossing will close a major gap in the I-69 corridor. It's important internationally because I-69 is a major freight corridor stretching from Canada to Mexico," Gov. Beshear said.

The Indiana DOT and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet submitted the application for funding through the Multimodal Discretionary Grant Program, which was created as part of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The two states propose to put up \$513.7 million from other funding sources if the grant is approved. The states already have obligated \$265 million toward environmental studies and construction of the first section of the project in Henderson.

The \$1.4 billion project, which has been branded I-69 ORX, is one of three mega-projects that have been at the top of Gov. Beshear's transportation priority list, along with the \$3.6 billion Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project linking Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati and the \$400 million expansion and extension of the Mountain Parkway through Eastern Kentucky.

The I-69 ORX project has three sections:

- **Section 1:** The Kentucky approach, which will extend I-69 in Kentucky by 6 miles, from where it currently ends at its intersection with the Henderson Bypass (KY 425) to the

Ohio River. Section 1 has three new or rebuilt interchanges, nine new land bridges and seven rehabilitated bridges. Gov. Beshear broke ground for Section 1 in June 2022.

- **Section 2:** A new, four-lane Ohio River bridge. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2027 and be completed in 2031. However, if awarded the grant, the two states will be able to accelerate the timeline.
- **Section 3:** The Indiana approach. INDOT plans to take bids for the project late this year, begin construction in 2024 and complete the project in 2026.

INDOT traffic projections anticipate more than 50,000 vehicle river crossings per day by 2045, easily within the capacity of the new I-69 bridge and its approaches. They will be built to modern interstate standards – two 12-foot-wide driving lanes in each direction with outside shoulders at least 10 feet wide and inside shoulders of no less than 4 feet.

I-69 currently is connected in the Henderson-Evansville region by way of U.S. 41, which crosses the Ohio River on two bridges that were not designed for interstate travel. The northbound span was built in 1932. The southbound bridge was added in 1965. Both spans are rated “adequate” for their legal load requirements but becoming increasingly costly and difficult to maintain, hurting the corridor’s reliability for freight movement.

The new I-69 bridge will be reliable, constructed to be more resilient to extreme weather, and equipped in ways to improve safety, including efficient LED lighting and new signage.

“This project is critical to future economic development and equally important for safety,” Kentucky Transportation Secretary Jim Gray said. “It aligns with the goals and objectives of the [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) from the U.S. Department of Transportation to improve roadway safety and work toward zero fatalities on the nation’s roads.”

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