

# City of Memphis



**JIM STRICKLAND**  
MAYOR

TENNESSEE

January 6, 2022

Governor Bill Lee  
Tennessee State Capitol, 1st Floor  
600 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

As we discussed last month, I support the construction of a new bridge across the Mississippi River at Memphis.

The May 11<sup>th</sup> discovery of the crack in the De Soto bridge's structure which caused the temporary disruption of barge traffic under the bridge and a nearly three-month long interruption of travel on the bridge negatively affecting Memphis and West Tennessee businesses and commuters. The emergency repair and bridge closure that ensued was a reminder that the I-40 bridge is not just important to our state and region, but also a critical artery in the global supply chain.

The importance of the new bridge is more pronounced when considering Memphis' role in the transportation, logistics, and distribution space. Memphis holds distinction as home to the busiest cargo airport in the world and one of the busiest trucking corridors in the nation. Additionally, our city is one of only two American cities with five Class I railroads within its borders and our inland port on the Mississippi River is significant because it remains ice-free throughout the year. All of these assets rely on the nearly 50-year old Hernando De Soto bridge, the over 70 year-old I-55 bridge, and the two over 100 year old railroad bridges that currently span the Mississippi. This aging infrastructure is a challenge that we should no longer delay in addressing.

For these reasons, I would like to formally request that the building of a new bridge across the Mississippi River at Memphis be listed as a long-term transportation infrastructure project for our state. It is a project of national significance and prioritizing it will ensure we are able to align our state, local, and industry interests and efforts in advocating at the federal level.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Strickland", written over a circular blue stamp or seal.

Jim Strickland  
Mayor of Memphis