

# The Longaberger Company

One Market Square  
1500 East Main Street  
Newark, Ohio 43055-8847

January 10, 2000

Dan Neff  
OMEGA  
326 Highland Avenue  
P.O. Box 130  
Cambridge, Ohio 43725-0130

Dear Dan:

I am writing in strong support of the efforts to improve State Route 16 in Coshocton and Muskingum Counties to a four lane, limited access divided highway. In fact, our company supports the efforts of community leaders in eastern Ohio, like Rick Platt in Jefferson County and Paul Prater in Coshocton County, to create a four-lane macro corridor linking Pittsburgh and Columbus, opening areas of the region to economic development.

The Longaberger Company has made a significant investment over the past decade in plant, equipment and infrastructure at our three manufacturing operations and other locations in eastern Ohio. In fact, we estimate our investment at more than \$300 million. The result has been job creation for the region, from 1,000 employees in 1990 to 7,600 today, and increased tourism for the State of Ohio. Annually, we are experiencing 500,000 guests visiting our facilities in northern Muskingum County, Dresden, Hartville and Newark.

But a continuing concern for our company has been the network of mostly rural roads connecting our facilities from the standpoint of safety and access. First, our employees reside in more than 30 Ohio counties and some travel more than an hour to work each way. Improving State Route 16 from Columbus to Newcomerstown, and ultimately to Pittsburgh, will mean less travel time for many people. Additionally, and more importantly, we have unfortunately seen accidents rise as traffic volume has increased. The safety of our employees, their families, our guests and area residents was our primary motivation to fund, along with the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, the improvements to State Route 16 in northern Muskingum County. The reasons for improving State Route 16 from SR 60 in Muskingum County to Coshocton are just as valid today if not more so.

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In addition to concerns about the safety and access of employees and guests traveling to our facilities, we are concerned that we are able to expeditiously ship product to our customers throughout the United States. Later this year, our new 500,000 s.f. distribution center, located at our main manufacturing campus on State Route 16, will become operational. This facility will generate thousands of monthly in-bound and out-bound shipments. The distribution center represents a \$23 million investment in technology, plant and equipment to help us more efficiently send millions of items to our customers in a timely manner.

This investment is compromised if we are frustrated because shipments from our Hartville facility in Stark County or vendors in East Liverpool are delayed or impeded because of inadequate roads. The improvements resulting from the Pittsburgh to Columbus Corridor would greatly benefit our company, our vendors and, ultimately, our customers.

We have been very appreciative of the local, state and federal government efforts to improve roads in our area in the past five years. We respectfully request that the job be finished through the completion of the Pittsburgh to Columbus Corridor for the benefit of Ohio and this region of the United States. Thank you for your efforts to make this goal a reality as we begin the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,



Tami Longaberger