

Good afternoon and thank you for coming to our press conference.

I-69 brought me into the political process, in January of 2003. It was because of a speech I gave then, decrying the then-Governor's selection of the "3C" route, that several local Democrats asked me if I might not run for office. And here I am, having run for, and won, elected office largely because my strong opposition to the highway resonated with thousands of Monroe County residents, residents who feel as strongly and as passionately about the issue as I do.

Today, four years since I last ran, I-69 is again fresh in our minds. The current Governor began bulldozing homes last month, even though he's only got enough money to build a few token miles of road.

And that event was not without its tragic scandal, as the media broke the story that the contractor selected to build those token miles had, just last December, settled a fraud charge against it, for corruptly switching road samples and performing shoddy work.

That scandal served to underline the utter pointlessness of the road. In a nation facing ever-rising fuel costs, Indiana *can* come up with a better solution than building, at a price of twenty-million dollars a mile, yet another highway in a state that one Indianapolis Star Columnist described as *already* being "varicose with highways."

For nearly a decade now, Bloomington has been annually described by Forbes' magazine as the "best small place for business" in all of Indiana. And it somehow managed to do that without having a ten-lane international truck highway right through its middle. I think it did it *because* it did not have a ten-lane international truck highway, right through its middle.

The city of Bloomington took a courageous and progressive lead when its Council passed a resolution opposing I-69. Bloomington's current Mayor, Mark Kruzan, has been steadfast and unwavering in his opposition as well.

Given the recent events, given that our state and nation are entering a deepening transportation fuel cost crisis – a crisis that building yet another 1950s-era truck highway cannot correct and will, in fact, worsen, and given the utter failure of the state legislature and the Governor to proactively assess the situation and come up with real solutions, not political solutions, it's clear that we are on our own.

And given that, it's time for Monroe County government to join its voice with that of the City of Bloomington and formally oppose the highway, also. It's time for Monroe County government to declare "we're not interested." It's time to declare that there are far better ways to put four-billion Hoosier taxpayer dollars to work.

It's time to end the madness at our doors.