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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

221314
HU013-70

April 11, 1997

The Honorable Solomon P. Ortiz
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Solomon:

As you requested when I visited with you and your Hispanic Caucus colleagues March 20, I've checked into the status of the application to build a crossborder bridge at Brownsville/Matamoros and wanted to report what I've found. As you know, it's been a long, difficult process, but I believe we're close to having something to announce.

The major sticking point, of course, has been the negative environmental impact which a Brownsville/Matamoros bridge could potentially have on the fragile Lower Rio Grande Valley. On March 13, after years of discussions and environmental studies, the US Government received what we hope will be the final tranche of additional environmental documentation requested from the Port of Brownsville. We are currently reviewing the material.

Our hope, Congressman, is to be able to announce significant progress during this year's US/Mexico Bi-National Commission, as I have advocated, to be held May 5 in Mexico City as part of the President's visit. We have a number of issues on the agenda, as you would suspect, but this is an important issue which directly affects the lives of our people and we are committed to moving ahead.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. I look forward to working closely with you in the weeks and months to come.

Personally,

W. J.

bcc: Steve
Deak

Solomon - You are a good friend whom I like and admire. I'll continue to try to be an advocate for you on this and other important issues.