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Darrell L. Roberts, *Executive Director*

April 17, 2019

Mayor Frank Klipsch, Chairman and Commission Members
Bi-State Regional Commission Transportation Policy Committee
1504 Third Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201

Dear Chairman Klipsch and Members of the Commission:

I am the Executive Director of Helmets to Hardhats (H2H). H2H is a national program that works to connect National Guard, Reserve, veteran, and transitioning active-duty military members with quality career training and employment opportunities in the construction industry. The program was created by the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment and Veterans Employment, a 501(c)(3) non-profit joint labor-management organization supported by building trades unions and construction industry employers. H2H has successfully helped transition over 30,000 military veterans into registered joint labor-management apprenticeship programs and with construction employers across the United States.

These careers all lead to middle class life sustaining wages and benefits. The program has been doing this work for over 16 years.

The H2H program has worked with building trades unions and their signatory contractors in Iowa and elsewhere on the recruitment and training of many veterans over the years. I understand that the Commission is considering use of Iowa's Federal-Aid SWAP program for its upcoming construction projects. I am writing to urge the Commission to opt out of the program as it will have a detrimental impact on veterans living in the Bi-State area or wish to return to the area after their military service and find careers in the construction industry.

Under federal law, a recipient of federal financial assistance has an obligation to encourage contractors to hire veterans. This can be done through participation in the H2H program. The only way H2H can help transitioning veterans find careers in the construction industry in the Bi-State area is if there are available work opportunities. By opting out of the SWAP program for its projects, the Commission can ensure that local veterans are accepted into joint labor-management apprenticeship programs serving the Bi-State area because local contractors will have work

available for them. I request, therefore, that the Commission opt out of the SWAP program and on future construction projects seek out contractors who work with Local Unions and contractors in the area that work with H2H so that we can put more veterans to work. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell Roberts".

Darrell Roberts
Executive Director