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## **Louisiana Businesses and Industry Groups Voice Support for Constitutional Amendment #4**

*Lafayette, LA* – Today, the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and I-49 South Coalition, along with 21 partner organizations across Louisiana, announced they are in full support of Constitutional Amendment #4, which will put Louisiana on track to create a state infrastructure bank modeled on best practices.

This coalition of business and economic development organizations argue that the creation of an infrastructure bank is an innovative option for local governments and ports seeking low-interest financing for much needed projects. Citing Louisiana's population growth and booming economy, they contend that localities need additional capacity to invest in the infrastructure that will support long-term economic growth.

Jason El Koubi, President and CEO of the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, stressed the unified position of the Acadiana business community. "In order for Acadiana to be competitive and build on our current economic momentum, it is crucial that we work together to find creative, affordable ways to invest in our transportation infrastructure priorities." Adding further, "State infrastructure banks offer an effective tool that has been used successfully in many states to give communities access to competitive financing. On November 4, voters can take a significant step toward improving our infrastructure by voting yes for Constitutional Amendment #4."

For I-49 South Coalition Chairman David Mann, the time for creating a state infrastructure bank is now. "The I-49 South Coalition supports Constitutional Amendment #4 because it offers an ambitious solution to the financing needs of our communities, without the burden of a tax increase. We need to consider all alternative funding mechanisms to alleviate the demands on our current infrastructure." Mann continued, "The infrastructure bank, once created, will give local governments the option to receive low-interest financing. The I-49 South Coalition and its members ask that you vote yes for Constitutional Amendment #4 on November 4."

A state infrastructure bank would offer affordable rates for qualified projects in communities throughout Louisiana. Much like a traditional bank, the infrastructure bank would review loan applications from local governments and provide funds based on project specifications and viability of repayment.

Passage of Constitutional Amendment #4 will not immediately create an infrastructure bank, but it paves the way for the legislature to design a bank based on national best practices. The amendment provides the state treasurer with authority to move existing public funds into an infrastructure bank, once the institution is created. Passage of the amendment will not raise taxes or increase fees. Once a bank is created, it will have operating expenses, but these expenses can be covered by revenue generated from its loan program.

State infrastructure banks also have a proven track record of success. For example, the bank in South Carolina has provided more than \$3 billion in loans after being initially capitalized with state and federal funds. Unlike some state infrastructure banks, South Carolina's bank can be the primary vehicle for funding for projects. Nearly \$200 million in loans from the bank were used to complete a section of I-520 around North Augusta known as the "Palmetto Parkway."

Leaders across Acadiana stressed the need for infrastructure improvements and the benefits of a state infrastructure bank.

Kam Movassaghi, President of FENSTERMAKER and member of statewide campaign 4 for the Roads, stated, "Our local communities require effective means to finance their transportation infrastructure needs. A capitalized infrastructure bank provides that opportunity."

Jan Swift, President and CEO of Upper Lafayette Development Foundation, pointed out the amendment offers an avenue to create an opportunity for investment in our future. "Upper Lafayette is in favor of pro-active legislation which thinks ahead, does not tax business or individuals, and which enhances the quality of life for everyone in our community. We have given Amendment 4 much thought, and our leadership will vote yes on November 4."

Leaders also emphasized the positive impact the passage of Constitutional Amendment #4 would have on our regional economy.

Janet Faulk-Gonzales, President & CEO of Greater Iberia Chamber of Commerce focused on the need to embrace innovative solutions. "Sound infrastructure is imperative for building a strong economy. We believe that establishing an infrastructure bank is part of the solution to improving everything from roadways and bridges to water and sewer systems."

Michael Tarantino, President & CEO of Iberia Development Foundation informed voters that the passage of the amendment will create sustainable prosperity for our region. "Along with a well trained workforce, a first class infrastructure system is critical to Acadiana's growth and prosperity. Amendment #4 creates an important tool to helping us reach our potential."

Gregg Gothreaux, President & CEO of Lafayette Economic Development Authority argued that passage of the amendment would be a positive step in the right direction for Acadiana. "The passage of this amendment has the potential to remove a major barrier to investment in much-needed infrastructure across the region and state. Ultimately, these infrastructure investments will increase the region's attractiveness to new business and allow existing business to be more competitive."

The coalition is urging those going to the polls to vote "YES" to Constitutional Amendment #4 on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

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