What is the Mid-States Corridor?
The Mid-States Corridor Project is a proposed mostly new-terrain highway connecting Rockport, Indiana to Interstate 69. It would utilize existing US 231 from Rockport to I-64, then bypass Huntingtonburg and Jasper and reach I-69 in one of three directions: northwest, due north, or northeast. The highway would cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and possibly well over a billion dollars.

Preparation of a Tier 1 environmental impact statement (EIS) is underway. The original release timeline — Fall of 2020 — for the draft EIS has been pushed back. Release of the draft EIS will be followed by a formal public comment period and public meetings. Once the public comments are considered, and any further project changes made, a Final Environmental Impact Statement will be published along with a Record of Decision that selects the final preferred highway route, in the form of a 2,000-foot wide corridor. The next stage — if the project goes forward — would be a Tier 2 EIS that would identify and analyze the exact-on-the-ground alignment of the highway within the 2,000-foot wide corridor selected in Tier 1. For the Tier 2 process, the route may be subdivided into sections and a separate Tier 2 EIS prepared for each section. For example, for the new-terrain I-69 project, the final route was evaluated in six separate Tier 2 environmental studies. Construction cannot start until the Tier 2 process is completed, either for a specific section if the route is subdivided, or for the entire route if not.

The draft EIS is expected to examine 10 highway alternatives along 5 route corridors and select one of these alternatives as the preferred alternative. The total length of the 10 alternatives ranges from 56 to 101 miles. Miles of new-terrain roadway range from 34 miles to 62 miles in length, beginning at the I-64/US 231 interchange south of Huntingtonburg. The northern endpoint of the project depends on the corridor selected. The options are: I-69 at Washington, I-69 at US 231, or I-69 at Bloomington via SR 37 from Bedford or Mitchell. The 10 alternatives include different types of highway design — freeway, expressway, or super 2 — within the 5 corridors:

- **Freeway (interstate design)** — fully controlled access at interchanges (routes C-1, M-1, P-1)
- **Expressway (4-lane divided design)** — may include at-grade intersections as well as interchanges (routes B-2, C-2, M-2, O-2, P-2)
- **Super 2 design** — improved two lane highway with added passing lanes and wider shoulders (routes M-3, P-3)

The construction cost estimates for these alternatives range from $300 million to $1.47 billion.

Why are Hoosiers concerned about this highway project?
Every new highway has significant environmental impact. For the Mid-States project, several of the routes would cross some of the most sensitive, forested and rugged terrain found in Indiana, in some areas would irreparably damage unique geological features and wildlife habitats, and in all routes would destroy or divide family farms.

Northeast Routes M and O would cross the Hoosier National Forest’s acquisition boundary, ruin some of the most scenic views in the state and run very near if not through popular national forest and Martin State Forest recreation areas and trails. These routes would also cross Indiana’s karst region — an area underlain by limestone bedrock where sinkholes, caves, sinking streams and springs are widespread. In the heart of this region is the Lost River karst area, a globally significant karst region where up to a thousand sinkholes may occur in one square mile, where three national natural landmarks and Indiana’s second longest cave system are located, and where the Lost River runs underground for over 20 miles. Routes B and C would run adjacent to the Glendale State Fish and Wildlife Area.

The project’s potential impacts are listed in Table 1 (opposite this page). The loss of wildlife habitats, open spaces and other resources include:

- Up to 2,000 acres of forestland cleared, many ravines and valleys filled in and the interior habitat value of resulting fractured forests degraded
- 800 acres of floodplain filled and built on, resulting in increased damage from future floods
- 60 acres of wetlands — more loss for one of our rarest, yet most productive wildlife habitats
- Nearly 20 miles of streams disturbed or destroyed, including the East Fork of White River and tributaries, and the Lost River and its underground tributaries
- Almost 500 acres of karst features harmed or destroyed
- Critically important habitats for endangered grassland and forest birds — Loggerhead shrike, Barn owl, Cerulean warbler, Henslow’s sparrow
- endangered insect-eating bats — the Indiana bat, Northern long-eared bat, gray bat and four other bat species
- cave-dwelling species including the endangered Hoosier cavefish
- endangered river species including the Lake sturgeon and five federally listed freshwater mussels
- Secondary impacts from related development along the highway which would increase the loss of forestland, farmland, and wetlands by 22% to 44%.
Economic and property losses include:
- As many as 255 homes and 51 businesses lost
- Over 1,500 acres of farmland paved

Besides the potential for major environmental impact, the environmental review process to date is seriously flawed. Among the weaknesses in the project study are:

- **INDOT has not shown that there is a real need for an expensive new highway**
  - For example, INDOT claims a new highway is needed to address traffic safety. However, existing roads and highways could be improved or reconfigured to address traffic safety concerns.
  - INDOT claims a new highway would improve “connectivity,” but does not demonstrate that people or businesses have difficulty moving around the area.
  - INDOT says a new highway would lead to economic development, but it is essentially trying to drive unsustainable “sprawl” development that would harm local communities instead of investing in and improving existing infrastructure.

- **INDOT has not done a fair analysis of non-highway alternatives**
  - To the extent that there is a need to improve ways to move people and goods in southern Indiana, INDOT should consider increased use of passenger and freight rail
  - INDOT should also consider whether upgrades and re-engineering of existing roadways could meet any purported needs. Congestion occurring around Huntingburg and Jasper can be addressed without building another destructive new terrain highway across southern Indiana barely 20 miles east of the new terrain I-69.

Why is this project moving forward given the disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic?

The project sponsors are proceeding with planning despite the unprecedented health, economic and social disruptions resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, the public’s right to participate in a meaningful way in the process is severely hampered, and serves to increase anxiety for the Hoosiers who may be directly affected by the project, coming on top of the more pressing concerns they are facing due to the pandemic.

### Mid-States Corridor Highway Alternatives Comparison Chart - For Alternatives Carried Forward For Detailed Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Alternative</th>
<th>B-2</th>
<th>C-1</th>
<th>C-2</th>
<th>M-1</th>
<th>M-2</th>
<th>M-3</th>
<th>O-2</th>
<th>P-1</th>
<th>P-2</th>
<th>P-3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miles (new terrain construction)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
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<td>freeway</td>
<td>expressway</td>
<td>expressway</td>
<td>super 2</td>
<td>expressway</td>
<td>expressway</td>
<td>super 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction cost (in millions)</td>
<td>$278.8</td>
<td>$474.6</td>
<td>$344.4</td>
<td>$1,178.0</td>
<td>$855.6</td>
<td>$465.0</td>
<td>$703.8</td>
<td>$610.2</td>
<td>$442.8</td>
<td>$372.6</td>
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<td>Interchanges/grade separations</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
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<td>$21.7</td>
<td>$297.3</td>
<td>$34.1</td>
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<td>$215.3</td>
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<td>$279</td>
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<td>Total roadway construction cost</td>
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<td>$366.1</td>
<td>$1,475.3</td>
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<td>$499.1</td>
<td>$731.7</td>
<td>$825.5</td>
<td>$470.7</td>
<td>$400.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impacts (acres)**

- Total right-of-way: 1,645
- Forestland: 221
- Floodplain: 234
- Wetland: 52
- Farmland: 1,521
- Karst features area: 0
- Stream length (feet): 47,738
- Homes: 121
- Businesses: 0

**Notes:**
1. These listed stream impacts do not include impacts to the significant sub-surface “stream” drainage prevalent in these karst-intense areas.
2. Costs estimated based on per mile and per interchange costs contained in the Mid-States reports listed above.
3. Costs estimated do not include land acquisition, relocations, design/engineering, construction management, utility relocation, and contingencies.
4. Freeway Alternatives C-L, M, and P include the added costs of upgrading at-grade intersections along the existing US 231 expressway in Spencer County to interchanges or grade separations. Freeway Alternative M-1 also includes the added costs of interchanges on SR 37 between Bedford and I-69 to Bloomington.

**Sources:**
- Mid-States Corridor Screening of Alternatives, February 2020
- Mid-States Corridor Impact Calculation Appendix, February 2020
- Construction Costs Estimates Appendix, February 2020

**Learn more and take action**

Contact Governor Holcomb and INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness and tell them to suspend project planning and reevaluate the project’s need and impact considering the more pressing needs for the state’s attention and resources.

EHolcomb@gov.in.gov, 317-232-4567
JMGuinness@indot.in.gov, 317-232-5525

Contact your state legislators (isg.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators) and ask them to convey this same message to the Governor.

Read the detailed joint comment letter on the Mid-States Corridor project submitted by 74 organizations and businesses here: tinyurl.com/y76tsf38

For Mid-States Corridor project information:
midstatescorridor.com

For more information

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Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter, Bowden Quinn bowden.quinn@sierraclub.org

Orangeville Rise, Janet Kennedy janetknp@gmail.com

Indiana Karst Conservancy, Keith Dunlap Keith.Dunlap@outlook.com

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