



## Milwaukee Faith and Health Groups Ask Federal Court to Halt Zoo Interchange Expansion Work

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** February 7, 2013

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MILWAUKEE, WI – On Wednesday, Milwaukee community groups asked a federal court to stop plans to expand the Zoo Interchange in western Milwaukee County unless and until the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration look at incorporating public transportation into the project and properly consider air quality, social and economic effects of their plans. The action falls amidst Wisconsin Transit Week that highlights the use of public transit statewide, despite cuts in our largest urban area.

"Milwaukee needs both highway and public transportation investment," said ACLU of Wisconsin attorney Karyn Rotker. "The problem with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's decision to expand the Zoo Interchange is that they failed to take a hard look at the impact their plan would have on people in urban Milwaukee who don't have cars or drivers' licenses, and who depend on public transportation to get to jobs, schools, and health care providers. Their plan puts our regional transportation system out of balance."

In the request for a preliminary injunction while the court case is pending, members of Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin explain that the racial segregation in the Milwaukee region is well documented. Disparities in access to public transportation for communities of color and people with disabilities are also significant. Slashing transit, while expanding highways to the suburbs, has a discriminatory effect on transit-dependent city residents and is something that state and federal officials didn't seriously consider.

The state and federal government also failed to address concerns about the effect of their plan on the urban environment. "Environmental issues in dense, urban areas are not limited only to green spaces," said Midwest Environmental Advocates attorney Dennis Grzezinski. "The urban environment involves environmental justice issues like access to breathing clean air, considering the health impacts of pollution such as asthma and other respiratory diseases, and having the social and economic resources to live. The government needs to consider how their decisions affect those with the fewest resources and how to avoid unnecessary impacts to the exceedingly scarce open spaces and recreational areas in cities like Milwaukee."

(continued)



Plaintiff Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAHA) is a multi-racial, interfaith organization committed to addressing justice issues that have an impact on the community and on the members of MICAHA's 38 member congregations. Plaintiff Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin (BHCW) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to improve the health status of African-Americans and to ensure equitable and comprehensive health for all people.

Midwest Environmental Advocates is a public interest organization that uses the power of the law to support communities fighting for environmental accountability. Learn more about the Midwest Environmental Advocates on the web at [midwestadvocates.org](http://midwestadvocates.org), like MEA on [Facebook](#) or follow @MidwestAdvocate on [Twitter](#).

The ACLU of Wisconsin has approximately 6,500 members who support its efforts to defend the civil liberties and civil rights of all Wisconsin residents. For more on the work of the ACLU of Wisconsin, visit our [webpage](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter [@ACLUofWisconsin](#) and [@ACLUMadison](#).

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