

Note to All Media

Attached is a letter from Warren Mayor Jim Fouts asking Michigan Governor Rick Snyder to declare a State of Emergency in Warren because of delays in the improvement of I-696 eastbound and westbound lane between I-75 and I-94.

In his letter, Fouts includes public safety dangers cited by the city fire and police commissioners.

Mayor Fouts can be reached at his office (586) 574-4520, cell (586) 481-0545 or home (586) 573-8058.

September 18, 2018



James R. Fouts - Mayor

Governor Rick Snyder
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909
Michigan.gov/Snyder

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Dear Governor Snyder:

As the mayor of Michigan's third largest city in population and the city most affected by any delays in the improvement of eastbound and westbound I-696 between I-94 and I-75, **I am requesting that you declare a state of emergency to stop the delay of I-696 in Warren.**

This request is based on facts of Warren's fire commissioner and police commissioner that the public safety of our residents is endangered because of traffic congestion on our eastbound and westbound main roads.

Below is a report from Bill Dwyer, Warren police commissioner:

This morning I met with representatives from patrol, traffic, dispatch and the traffic engineer to discuss the impact of the I-696 construction on police operations. All of the issues arise from the obvious increase in traffic on Warren roads. The average daily volume of traffic on I-696 prior to construction was 150,000 vehicles daily. These vehicles are now finding alternate east/west routes on Warren surface streets.

Traffic Issues:

- 1. Extreme traffic back up on 11 Mile Service Drive, 12, 13, and 14 mile roads. 22,000 vehicles going to GM Tech Center, 8,000 to TACOM.*
- 2. Increased traffic through neighborhoods as people seek routes away from backed-up mile roads. This has caused a sharp increase in citizen complaints of speeding in neighborhoods. This is an ongoing problem in the residential areas between 11 Mile and 12 Mile.*
- 3. **Slower response time. For priority runs, officers must navigate greatly increased traffic with emergency lights on and east/west travel is limited due to not being able to use I-696. For non-priority runs, officers are slowed due to being stuck in traffic like everyone else.***
- 4. Increased accidents. Accidents during the last four months have increased 27% over the previous year. 2017 – 1507 accidents, 2018 – 1916 accidents.*

5. *Traffic bureau seeing greatly increased number of complaints. Traffic Bureau working with MDOT to solve issues as they arise.*

Below is a report from Skip McAdams, Warren fire commissioner:

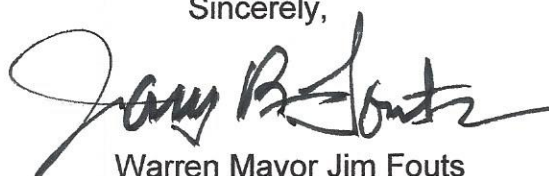
1. *In order for emergency vehicles to gain access to I-696 for an emergency response we must drive in the opposite direction of the service drive and down the four (4) open exit ramps in (11 Mile, Van Dyke, Hoover and Groesbeck) the opposite direction and then proceed in the opposite direction of traffic or make a U-turn to go in the direction of traffic to respond to emergency incident.*
2. *The Mound Road reconstruction from I-696 to M-59 is scheduled to begin in 2019 meaning traffic will need to shift to Van Dyke and other major N/S thoroughfares increasing traffic on these already overcrowded main roads through Warren.*
3. *The I-75 rebuild from Bloomfield Twp. to 8 Mile Road is slated to begin in 2019. This major reconstruction project will also cause traffic to shift to other north/south major thoroughfares, including Van Dyke, as travelers seek to avoid the road construction.*
4. *GM Tech Center has approximately 22,000 employees who must get to work with that number increasing to 25,000 in the near future how will these people get to and from work if I-696, I-75 and Mound road all have major reconstruction projects occurring at the same time? Additionally, there are multiple other large manufacturing facilities located along Mound Road which will also be negatively impacted by the delays, as well as future construction projects.*
5. *County and local road projects further complicate the flow of traffic in the City of Warren and, when combined with neighboring communities road projects, will further complicate and compound traffic congestion in and around the City of Warren and Southeast Michigan as a region.*
6. ***Accidents on alternative routes caused by additional traffic adversely impact the flow of traffic and adds to first responders inability to respond to emergency incidents inclusive of the incidents on the major and local thoroughfares that are being used as alternative routes for routes under construction.***
7. *Winter weather including snow and ice storms can turn a normal commute into an adventure that has the potential to turn a 1 hour commute into a travel nightmare lasting several hours.*
8. *Economic investment by companies may be postponed or canceled as investors ask the question of how will my workforce and customers access my property when prolonged road construction has altered the normal flow of traffic to my existing or proposed business location.*

*In summary although, road construction is a necessary and vital evil that we must accommodate to ensure economic well-being of communities today and tomorrow, delays in the completion of these projects adversely impacts existing businesses and hampers proposed development in locations in and near major road construction projects. Additionally, emergency responders ability to navigate to locations in and near road construction projects using roads that are burdened with the additional traffic caused by prolonged road construction projects including I-696 hamper our ability to provide a timely response. **We must be able to respond in a timely manner to the 18,000 emergencies occurring annually in the city of Warren where response time is measured in minutes and seconds.** Other considerations include as commuters adjust to unfamiliar routes they add additional traffic to alternative routes which increases incidents of road rage, speeding and aggressive driving, as commuters attempt to stay on schedule in there commutes to work, shopping and leisure activities. Additionally, winter weather can further complicate travel times through and in the city of Warren as commuters shy away from business located on or near road construction projects negatively impacting businesses in these areas and the city as a whole. How the workforce and customers will get to a business is a question every investor must ask when deciding where to invest their finite capital resources. Additionally, the quality of life of residents who must navigate around traffic that has shifted to roads not normally used by commuters further negatively impacts the quality of life for all residents in our city. Finally, catastrophic unforeseen events that can cause a major thoroughfare to be closed for an extended period of time, including trucks striking bridges, tanker fires, etc occur on an infrequent but regular basis further stressing a traffic network that can ill afford the delays of road projects not being completed in a timely manor as promised. Many businesses in Warren and Southeast Michigan have not fully recovered from the "Great Recession" and do not have the depth of resources to sustain the loss of business caused by prolonged road construction projects.*

Clearly, we have a serious public safety problem in Warren due to delays in I-696 construction. It is critical to note that, if I-696 construction is delayed by winter, the problems in Warren will be magnified and public safety will be even more endangered.

Clearly, these reports prove beyond any doubt that traffic congestion in Warren merits a state of emergency declaration so immediate remedial action can be taken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Fouts", written in a cursive style.

Warren Mayor Jim Fouts