

August 19, 1960

Honorable Farris Bryant
Governor-Elect
P. O. Box 1776
Ocala, Florida

Dear Farris:

I am writing instead of calling because I think you should have an opportunity to think through, a little more carefully than a telephone conversation might allow, what I want to mention before responding.

You have received under separate cover a copy of my news conference report of yesterday. The subject of the turnpike was injected, and I made reference to my hopes for a discussion of this subject with you, out of which perhaps could come some understanding which would prove mutually helpful.

In all matters that arise like this between us, I shall certainly strive to put myself in your place, so to speak, and not expect anything of you that I would not feel that I would do were our positions reversed.

Picking up from where I left off in the news conference I would like either you personally or someone you might designate to make a careful analysis of everything our Turnpike Authority has done in seeking to develop an extension from Fort Pierce to Orlando. I do not ask this in the sense of expecting you then to declare carte blanche approval, but rather with the hope that you would then decide if the course we are following will justify a continuance by you of the basic planning we have advanced.

These facts are obvious: Our administration cannot build this turnpike. The most we can do now is to get the money available so that your administration can do so. To do this, certain commitments must be made which will necessarily affect your administration. We are going to run into some very formidable special concern public opposition. It is reported, and I think accurately so, that substantial funds

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are being raised to pay lawyers to fight any and all efforts which may be made. As you have doubtless noted, the Caldwell fire here in Tallahassee has been retained by one group of antagonists, and the opening legal gun was fired with a suit which was filed yesterday.

Now, we are perfectly willing to fight this legal battle and the public relations battle with an all-out effort to get the bonds validated and (assuming a good marketing arrangement can be worked out) sold. In no sense are we intimidated by the opposition.

It is going to be necessary, however, that we have some kind of concurrence from you, both to satisfy us that our efforts if successful will not prove futile, and furthermore, while I did not mention this in the news conference, I have been told that our New York financial advisors have said very frankly that before the bonds are sold the purchasers will insist upon some express assurance being made by you that the project will be consummated.

If you will agree to undertake a thorough review of the matter by a committee of your choice, I will have the Turnpike Authority and its necessary staff people meet with your group and make a complete showing of everything that has been done and planned in connection with the extension.

After this discussion, and after you have received a report from your committee, you and I might then meet for a discussion of what our respective positions will be, and how they may be projected in complete fairness to each of us and consistent with the sound needs of the state.

Let us hear from you by phone call collect or otherwise at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Governor

LC/ai

cc: Colonel Thomas P. Samuel, Chairman
State Turnpike Authority
P. O. Box 5005
Pt. Lauderdale, Florida

cc: All Turnpike Authority Members