



## THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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# Ambassador Bridge cleared for new customs plaza

By BRENT JANG  
Globe and Mail Update

*Canadian border authority grants approval for facility in Windsor, but hurdles remain*

The Canada Border Services Agency has approved plans by the Ambassador Bridge for a new customs plaza in Windsor, Ont., even though the move helps a Michigan billionaire who is embroiled in fierce fight against the Canadian government.

Manuel (Matty) Moroun, who wants to build a new crossing next to his 80-year-old Ambassador Bridge over the Detroit River, has satisfied the CBSA that he has the land amassed to allow Canadian customs officers to carry out their duties, according to a 35-page report commissioned by the federal agency.

Mr. Moroun had "submitted an environmental impact statement in December, 2007, proposing a new six-lane replacement bridge immediately adjacent to the west of the Ambassador Bridge," said the report by consulting firm Arup Canada Inc. But Ottawa required that Mr. Moroun first gain CBSA approval before Transport Canada would review any environmental assessment.

Having finally cleared the CBSA hurdle, the Ambassador Bridge is now able to forge ahead with seeking environmental approvals for building a new Detroit-Windsor span at North America's busiest commercial crossing, said Matthew Moroun, the son of the bridge's billionaire owner.

"Anything that is needed by the CBSA will fit on the existing land owned by the Ambassador Bridge. We are super-excited about this," Mr. Moroun said in an interview. He said that in an ideal world, the Ambassador Bridge would be able to have its environmental review for a new crossing conducted in 2010, but he expects red tape in reality, given that Ottawa is keen to construct a publicly owned span that will compete with the Ambassador Bridge.

"I'm sure Transport Canada is trying to figure out what banana peel to throw into the mix," said Mr. Moroun, who is vice-chairman of a family holding company overseeing the Ambassador Bridge. "I'm not a babe in the woods, and I know Transport Canada is going to tap dance and do whatever they can to delay our environmental case until next year, but the ball is squarely in their court."

James Kusie, a spokesman for Transport Minister John Baird, played down the importance of the CBSA-commissioned report.

"The study serves to identify CBSA requirements at the Ambassador Bridge related to border security issues and the facility requirements to examine goods and people entering Canada," Mr. Kusie said in a statement.

"In Canada, the environmental assessment of the Ambassador Bridge's proposal is on hold pending receipt of additional information," he said. "The Ambassador Bridge draft environmental assessment was returned to the


company more than two-and-a-half years ago as it failed to comply with established guidelines. Canada has been waiting for the bridge company to complete its environmental assessment since then. Despite several requests, the Ambassador Bridge Co. has not yet submitted the necessary information to Transport Canada so that the department can undertake the review of its environmental assessment submission."

Mr. Kusie added that the Ambassador Bridge still must obtain all necessary permits, including authorization under the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA), construction approval under the International Bridges and Tunnels Act (IBTA), municipal building permits and U.S. Coast Guard papers.

He said it is in the public interest to build the Detroit River International Crossing, a partnership project involving the governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario and Michigan.

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