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EDITORIAL

Loop veto sends needed message

Gov. Bobby Jindal's decision last week to veto \$5 million for further study of a Baton Rouge Loop was a prodigiously rational and much appreciated move in Livingston Parish. It sends a message we have long been waiting to hear: What this community wants for itself matters.

Contrast that to the attitude of East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Kip Holden who, failing to sell the project to the people it most affects, has vowed to press on anyway by unspecified means to force it down our throats.

Gov. Jindal ruled out spending millions to study a loop for a region not unified behind it.

East Baton Rouge Parish may be the largest, most prominent one in the Metro area, but it is not the only one. In this case, Livingston, Ascension and Iberville parishes have said no to what EBR wants. Perhaps the mayor of EBR would be better served by getting on the same page as his regional partners instead of trying to lord over them.

In his veto message, the governor did not rule out the possibility of the Baton Rouge loop as a viable solution to the region's traffic needs. He ruled out forcing it on a region that was not unified behind it. Common sense.

A citizens group representing thousands of residents in communities from Watson to Walker to Port Vincent turned in a petition to their government leaders opposing the idea of this privatized superhighway vivisectioning already established neighborhoods in Livingston Parish. For this they are branded from across the river as obstructionists against progress.

Yet citizens here with scores of legitimate questions about the loop have waited patiently through most of the past decade for answers that have not been forthcoming. Finally, they got fed up and — surprise, surprise — elected officials sided with those who put them in office.

What a radical idea!

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