

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) today issued the following statement in opposition to the closure of MoDoT District 9 Headquarters, which is located in Willow Springs, Missouri, in addition to consolidation of MoDoT staff in other rural areas of the state.

"I'm highly concerned about any plan to reduce the attention given to our rural state roads and highways, and I am dead set against the proposal on the table to do just that with MoDoT. Eliminating MoDoT District 9 means other regions must absorb nearly 10,000 square miles of our state containing 3,744 road miles. Between Sikeston and Springfield, from Jefferson City to the Arkansas line, there would be one office to serve the citizens of Missouri. District 9 already covers an area larger than nine U.S. states. I think it is irresponsible to look the other way on our state's rural transportation priorities, and it is foolish to expect MoDoT to have good information about roads located some 200 miles from the nearest office."

The MoDoT plan proposes to cut two-thirds of the agency's staff in the region.

"In Southern Missouri, we rely on our transportation infrastructure to travel significant distances every day to school, to work and on errands. We also require our roads and bridges to safely carry the commerce of our region, to connect tourism with our beautiful natural resources and recreational opportunities, and to provide speedy transit for law enforcement and first responders. When it comes to maintaining and improving this infrastructure, the job is never done. It is important for me and for the Missourians who use these roads every day that as many eyes as possible are on the transportation priorities of our region," Emerson said.