



November 2, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program  
INTERSTATE 5 (I-5) GOLDEN STATE CHOKEPOINT RELIEF PROGRAM**

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Business Council, I would like to strongly support the grant application being submitted by the County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the California Department of Transportation for FY 17 & FY 18 INFRA funding to advance the I-5 Golden State Chokepoint Relief Program.

The program proposed for INFRA grant funding offers a comprehensive approach to fixing congestion, addressing safety, and providing more route choices along a critical 18-mile stretch of I-5 in north Los Angeles County. It focuses on a chokepoint in the rapidly-growing Santa Clarita Valley where, hemmed in by mountains on both sides, I-5 becomes the sole major north-south link between the agricultural areas and logistics centers of the Central Valley and the Los Angeles Basin, where the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach support 40% of the nation's containerized freight volumes.

The lack of route choices along this chokepoint, combined with challenging inclined terrain, not only heightens the vulnerability of local residents and businesses to major traffic incidents and natural disasters, but makes the entire West Coast vulnerable to paralyzing supply chain disruptions along the entirety of I-5, a vital international trade corridor stretching nearly 800 miles from Mexico to Canada.

As a representative of over 150 businesses across LA County, I urge the USDOT to leverage over \$440 million in committed local investment and award discretionary INFRA funds for construction of truck lanes and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along the I-5 chokepoint and for widening of The Old Road, the key arterial highway paralleling I-5 that serves as the main critical bypass during freeway shutdowns. This targeted program of improvements will add new roadway capacity for commuters and freight traffic where it is most needed, thereby relieving the chokepoint, enhancing safety and security, and supporting continued economic development both in the Santa Clarity Valley and the nation as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Leslie". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Mary Leslie  
President  
LA Business Council