



December 6, 2016

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ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: U.S. Department of Transportation – FY2017 FASTLANE Grant Program
America’s Global Freight Gateway – Southern California Rail Project**

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Dear Secretary Foxx:

On behalf of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), I would like to offer this letter of support for the joint application from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Port of Los Angeles (POLA), Port of Long Beach (POLB), and Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE), to the Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) FY2017 grant program for funding for their America’s Global Freight Gateway – Southern California Rail Project.

The five components included in the Southern California Rail Project represent an investment totaling \$276.5 million to sustain a strategy of moving more port cargo via on-dock rail at the largest port complex in the Western Hemisphere, while reducing community impacts inland by grade separating high priority railroad crossings. The proposed FASTLANE request of \$81.2 million represents only 29 percent of total project cost, demonstrating Southern California’s tremendous commitment to improving the economy, mobility, safety, transportation infrastructure, and air quality by implementing the Rail Project. A breakdown of project costs and projected funding is provided below:

America’s Global Freight Gateway: Southern California Rail Project (\$ in millions)

	Durfee Avenue Grade Separation (ACE)	Montebello Corridor Grade Separation (ACE)	Alameda Corridor Southern Terminus Gap Closure (POLA)	Terminal Island Railyard Enhancement (POLA)	Terminal Island Wye (POLB)	Totals
Project Cost	\$78.4	\$142	\$9.34	\$23.61	\$23.1	\$276.5
FASTLANE (%)	\$15.0 (19%)	\$35.0 (25%)	\$5.04 (54%)	\$12.34 (52%)	\$13.8 (60%)	\$81.2 (29%)
Construction Start	Oct. 2017	Nov. 2019	Mar. 2017	Oct. 2018	Jan. 2018	

More than 40 percent of our country’s imports and nearly 30 percent of exports move through the two San Pedro Bay ports. The ports handled 15.4 million twenty-foot-equivalent units (TEUs) in 2015, with volumes projected to more than double by 2035, further straining our region’s congested transportation network. Even with current

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volume, on-dock rail capacity at the ports is insufficient, forcing cargo to be hauled by truck on highways to railyards outside the ports. This project would increase the number of containers being loaded and unloaded onto trains in the ports, thereby reducing truck-miles traveled on Primary Highway Freight System routes, including I-710 and I-110. These reductions will in turn improve safety, reduce wear and tear on roadways, and reduce emissions. Rail locomotive delay and emissions will also be reduced significantly. All of these benefits improve reliability of the supply chain.

Currently about 50 percent of port containerized cargo moves on the ACE corridor (in both directions, combined), which is a federally designated corridor of national significance. These rail lines also serve a significant amount of pure domestic cargo, moving to/from Southern California and the rest of the United States. With the number of daily freight trains projected to increase from 81 to 141 trains by 2025, communities in the County of Los Angeles will encounter significant problems at at-grade railroad crossings, including vehicle delay (including for emergency vehicles) and resulting emissions, train horn noise, and the potential for collisions. The ACE grade separations located in the Cities of Montebello and Pico Rivera and included in the Rail Project have been prioritized based on their potential to reduce or eliminate crossing delay, accidents, and estimated annual emissions from idling vehicles.

As a project that is consistent with the policies and goals set forth in the adopted 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), we support this project proposal and respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation give full and fair consideration to this important project proposal. Continued investment in a world-class, coordinated Southern California goods movement system that accommodates growth in the throughput of freight to the region and nation also supports and enhances the region's economic vitality, attainment of clean air standards, and the quality of life for our communities.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration of the joint FASTLANE application from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, in partnership with the California Department of Transportation, Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, and Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hasan Ikhata".

Hasan Ikhata
Executive Director