

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Support for the Columbus Crossroads INFRA Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

Columbus Crossroads is a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus and improve freight movement across Ohio and the Midwest. We write this letter to express our strong support for the joint Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project; and to urge your support for this transformational project of national and regional importance.

This INFRA grant will replace obsolete highway infrastructure at the Columbus Crossroads and reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. ODOT, the City of Columbus, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and a diverse group of community stakeholders and business entities have collaborated over the last decade to develop and implement this comprehensive vision.


Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71. The overlap serves commuter travel from across Central Ohio and freight from across the Midwest. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. The overlap's trench creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. Phase 4, which costs approximately \$199 million, is essential to improve safety and reduce congestion for commuters and pedestrians; improve access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus; and reconnect Columbus neighborhoods.

Completion of the Columbus Crossroads project has been identified as a top priority for the City of Columbus, the Central Ohio region, and the State of Ohio. However, this project cannot be completed without additional funding from the INFRA grants program. We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of the State of Ohio and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system. We thank you for your time and consideration of this letter, and respectfully request your support for this application.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicholas Semanko in Representative Beatty's office at Nicholas.Semanko@mail.house.gov, Nick Bush in Representative Stivers' office at Nick.Bush@mail.house.gov, or Nate Zimpher in Representative Balderson's office at Nate.Zimpher@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,


JOYCE BEATTY
Member of Congress


STEVE STIVERS
Member of Congress


TROY BALDERSON
Member of Congress