



Advancing Women in Transportation
Columbus Chapter

April 23, 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 Midwest. The Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Columbus Chapter would like to express our strong support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project; and to urge your support for this transformational project.

WTS is an international organization dedicated to building the future of transportation through the global advancement of women. As a former WTS Woman of the Year for the Washington DC Chapter, you understand that our organization has the vision of seeing equity and access for women in transportation. Not only is the Columbus Crossroads an important project because of all the transportation improvements that it provides, it also is important because this \$1.3 billion project it is being led and managed by Leslie Montgomery, a professional female engineer who has served as project manager since 2010. In addition to Leslie, many of our WTS Columbus Chapter members have dedicated many hours to making it the accomplishment it is today. This project has allowed these women to advance their careers and to showcase that women in our industry can successfully lead billion dollar transportation projects.

The project is part of a mega-project that is replacing obsolete highway infrastructure while also reconnecting, restoring, and revitalizing Downtown Columbus and surrounding communities. 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.

The state recently passed a transportation budget that generates more revenue through higher gas user fees and increased registration fees for local governments and electric vehicles. However, this project cannot be completed without leveraging 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 our region and state, and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system; and we respectfully urge your support for the application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Tiffany Elchert'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tiffany Elchert
WTS Columbus Chapter President

cc: Mr. Dan DeBono, Chief Infrastructure Funding Officer, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E. Washington, D.C. 20590