

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 25, 2020

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:

We write to express our strong support for and to reinforce the robust regional support for the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project. We urge your thoughtful consideration of this project of national, regional, and community importance.

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. 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. 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.

Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71. The overlap serves commuter travel 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. Critically, it will also improve access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus.

The Columbus Crossroads project creates additional lanes in each direction on I-70/I-71, eliminating nearly 70 percent of the traffic lane changes made on the interchange. These lanes will remove significant bottlenecks and back-ups that occur on I-70/I-71. Overall, the Columbus Crossroads project will improve safety at three of the State of Ohio's top ten crash locations.

Last year, ODOT submitted earlier iterations of this project to the Department of Transportation for consideration and we are grateful for the feedback and consideration received. Since the last application, the Columbus Crossroads project has continued to advance with state dollars; however, this project cannot be completed without leveraging additional funding from the INFRA program on the federal level.

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 meritorious project.

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

Sincerely,



Troy Balderson
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress