



# MIKE DEWINE

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## GOVERNOR OF OHIO

May 21, 2019

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

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. I write 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. I also urge your support for this site project which experienced over 1000 crashes between 2015 to 2017 and consistently ranks in Ohio's top 10 high crash locations.

Phase 4 focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71, which serves commuter traffic from across Central Ohio, in addition to freight from across the nation. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. As a result, ODOT has identified the 70/71 overlap as a freight bottleneck.

The 70/71 overlap also lies in a “trench” which creates a physical barrier between the central business district of Columbus and neighborhoods south of the downtown area. Consequently, Phase 4 is essential not only for improving safety and reducing congestion, but also for improving accessibility for both commuters and pedestrians to essential services and over 100,000 jobs.

The Phase 4 INFRA application leverages a major local investment of over \$60 million to replace obsolete highway infrastructure and reconnect, restore, and revitalize downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. A diverse group of community stakeholders and business entities have collaborated with ODOT, the City of Columbus, and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) over the last decade to develop and implement this comprehensive vision.

Completion of the Columbus Crossroads project is a top priority for the state. This project cannot be completed without leveraging additional funding from the INFRA grants program. I respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the safety and prosperity of our state and region and to the resiliency of the national interstate highway system.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike DeWine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "DeWine" clearly legible.

Mike DeWine  
Governor, State of Ohio

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