



February 14, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority, please accept this letter of support for seeking infrastructure funding to support the Thornwood Corridor in Central Licking County, Ohio.

The Port Authority was formed 28 years ago out of the crisis of the pending closure of the former Newark AFB. The Base helped the nation win the Cold War, but had to find a new focus. It did.

Today, there are more jobs located at the former base and the surrounding new industrial park than were here in 1996 when it closed as a base. Locally funded infrastructure, property investment, and a continued support of manufacturing workforce development were the keys to achieving the growth of manufacturing jobs by 40% in the last three years. Central Licking serves as a national model for the reshoring of manufacturing.

The latest threat to our growing manufacturing jobs is uncompetitive transportation infrastructure.

That's why the Port Authority, joined by our customers as evidenced by my attached collective letter of support from industry here, is proud to support and urge DOT funding for the Thornwood Corridor.

The Corridor serves the largest manufacturing corridor in Central Ohio. Five industrial parks, combined, rank among the largest industrial corridors in the region and stand out for manufacturing focus. Manufacturing is the largest contributor to the state's GDP and \$74,000+ average annual wages on our campus prove the value to the workforce. Intel's choice of Licking County proves that point and the first Intel supplier new to Ohio expanded to this corridor.

Timing matters and this important project is needed now. I know from my personal experience around the state and from serving with the Board of JobsOhio, that Ohio is littered with infrastructure projects that were needed when they were sought, but, regrettably, didn't get done until after the need was diminished or lost. We must persevere to ensure Thornwood isn't added to that dubious list.

Very respectfully yours,

RICK PLATT
President and CEO