



Inland Empire Distribution Systems, Inc.

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Bigelow Gulch Corridor Safety and Mobility Improvement Project

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my support of Spokane County's application to the Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program. Through infrastructure improvements along the Bigelow Gulch/Forker Corridor, Spokane County seeks to support regional economic development with a freight corridor link between major distribution centers and industrial/commercial businesses in the Greater Spokane Region with an anticipated build-out date of 2023.

As a principal and SVP of the largest Third Party Logistics company in Eastern Washington providing a vital link in the supply chain for businesses in WA, ID, MT and OR, I support this application which improves freight movements through the greater Spokane region and corrects safety hazards along a dangerous, busy, narrow, rural connector between two growing industrial, urban areas. My business employs over 140 people with a living wage job and benefits. Our services provide vendor managed inventory (VMI) services to most all manufacturing companies in the Spokane / Coeur d'Alene area. Improvements to this freight corridor will enhance our delivery services to the north of Spokane with the costs savings in transportation passed along to our customers.

I'd like to highlight some of the details of the project that are most significant to my organization:

- This project drastically improves the safety of a narrow, undersized rural collector and commuter route that has a history of fatal and serious crashes.

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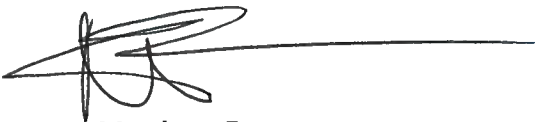
- The project adds additional travel lanes, turn lanes, truck climbing lanes and shoulder space to an established freight and commuter corridor.
- The realignment and widening of the Bigelow Gulch Corridor increases capacity providing for efficient and reliable movement of freight and goods.
- Improved travel times for freight and commuters.
- Reduces carbon footprint by improving freight fluidity, e.g. steady flow - less brakeage.

Significant project investment has been secured from state and regional partners through the collaborative leadership effort demonstrated by Spokane County, but more capital is needed to allow this project to reach its full potential. The funding partners for this project include Spokane County, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), County Road Administration Board (CRAB), Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), Washington State Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) and National Highway Freight Programs (NHFP). This fully represents the current funding partnerships for the project, and represents over 65% of the current total cost. If awarded, the federal BUILD funds will facilitate a timely completion and deliver an impactful project that substantially benefits the region.

The corridor improvement is an integral piece of the region's long-range transportation plan, providing traffic communication infrastructure across the entire length of the project and linking the project's traffic signals to the region's traffic control center. This project is key to the growth and prosperity of the Spokane region and its booming manufacturing and industrial businesses. If our transportation network cannot safely and efficiently support commerce in the region, we cannot persevere with our true goals. In order to help our business and community thrive, we urge you to provide funding that is crucial to the construction of the Bigelow Gulch Corridor Safety and Mobility Improvement Project.

Please feel free to contact me at mattewers@ieds.net if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Matthew Ewers
Principal, SVP Business Development & Government Affairs
IEDS Logistics