



Inland Empire Distribution Systems, Inc.

July 30, 2021

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

**RE: Bigelow Gulch Corridor Safety and Mobility Improvement Project**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my support of Spokane County's application to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) 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 to various and numerous industrial and commercial locations in the Greater Spokane Region with an anticipated build-out date of 2024.

As one of the Principals of IEDS Logistics with operations in Spokane County and throughout the Inland Northwest, I support this application which improves freight fluidity and thus efficiency through the greater Spokane region and up to the Canadian Border. This project fixes safety hazards along a dangerous, busy, narrow, rural connector between two growing industrial, urban areas. We plan to use this route after completion to transport freight between northeast Washington and Spokane Valley. Furthermore, the improvements in this route will allow our trucks to safely export goods from the Spokane Valley/North Idaho region to British Columbia.

We are the railroad transloader for the Spokane/Coeur d'Alene region with over 500,000 square feet of warehouse space located within an industrial park of 5 million square feet. Currently our trucks are not using this corridor due to safety issues, instead we are taking a longer route through the city of Spokane.

To summarize, the improvements to this corridor will:

- Enhance the safety of a narrow, undersized rural collector and commuter route that has a history of fatal and serious crashes – hence we currently do not use this corridor to transport goods.

- Add additional travel lanes, turn lanes, truck climbing lanes and shoulder space to an established freight and commuter corridor.
- Increase throughput capacity by realignment and widening of the Bigelow Gulch Corridor providing for efficient and reliable movement of freight and goods.
- Improve travel times for freight which reduces cost of goods sold in the market.
- Reduce congestion, fuel consumption, and tailpipe emissions for our trucks currently idling in delayed traffic using the alternative Spokane's downtown arterial route.
- Separate arterial freight traffic from Middle School activities.
- Augment an integral piece of the region's long-range transportation plan to bypass freight through downtown Spokane

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 succeed. 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.

Should you want to discuss directly with me about the benefits of this investment, I can be reached via my direct line at 509-242-4404 or [mattewers@ieds.net](mailto:mattewers@ieds.net).

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,



Matt Ewes  
Principal, Senior Vice President  
IEDS Logistics