



Board of Directors: Theresa Noack, District 1; Laura Gates, District 2; Justin Voelker, District 3; Fred Helms, District 4; Mike Bly, District 5 **Superintendent:** Brian Talbott

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August 30, 2021

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

Bigelow Gulch Corridor Safety and Mobility Improvement Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the East Valley School District (EVSD), I am writing to express our 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 the EVSD school superintendent, I support this application which improves freight movements through the greater Spokane region and fixes safety hazards along a dangerous, busy, narrow, rural connector between two growing industrial urban areas. As a school district, we transport students throughout the Spokane Valley region. This endeavor is already vexed and complicated by the numerous and heavily traveled roads, railroads, and crossings. With the recent growth of additional industry, the time with students on board our buses continue to rise as has the impatience of other commuters. The safety and security of our students and staff are of utmost concern whether they are enroute or on our campuses. Improvements to the corridor will have substantial impacts on safety, the environment, regional business opportunities, and overall quality of life for commuters. This project drastically improves the safety of a narrow, undersized rural collector and commuter route that has a history of fatalities and serious bodily injury crashes.

Significant project investment has been secured from state and regional partners through the collaborative leadership effort demonstrated by Spokane County, however, more capital is needed to allow this project to reach its full potential and intended outcomes. The corridor improvements are an integral piece of the region's long-term planning. 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 will be unable to succeed.

On behalf of EVSD staff, parents, and patrons, I urge and encourage you to provide the necessary funding crucial to the construction of the Bigelow Gulch Corridor Safety and Mobility Improvement Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. L. Talbott".

Brian L Talbott
Superintendent
East Valley School District