

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

November 1, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I strongly support the City of Union Gap's submission to the U.S. Department of Transportation's INFRA Grant Program. The Regional Beltway Connector Project improves connectivity to the western portions of the Upper Yakima Valley, creating a continuous arterial route for freight through developing regions of Yakima County.

The City of Union Gap is undergoing rapid revitalization, spurred by significant growth in agricultural and commercial retail industries. Recent business development has brought 950 new jobs to the community and new development permits are expected to attract another 600 non-construction jobs. Though the City has completed improvements to ease access between Interstate-82 and its developing commercial core, additional investment is needed to ease truck freight congestion on overburdened arterial streets.

The Regional Beltway Connector Project reroutes truck freight traveling between I-82, shipping and packing facilities, and the Yakima Air Terminal away from community arterials, decreasing truck freight delay, easing congestion for motorists, and improving road safety for all users. The proposed route would provide connectivity to 400 acres of currently undeveloped industrial and commercial land, further contributing to local economic development and job growth. Flight opportunities out of the Yakima Air Terminal would increase, improving multi-modal transportation of goods and adding to the efficient distribution of U.S. made products to the marketplace.

By connecting the existing T-2 freight routes to Interstate-82, the Regional Beltway Connector Project could save approximately 26.6 hours of truck travel and 116 hours of non-truck travel a day. This project would contribute to the transportation of 10 million tons of freight per year to port, rail, and shipping facilities statewide.

The City of Union Gap's economic development strategy relies heavily upon the connectivity to the Upper Yakima Valley. I urge your full and fair consideration of the City of Union Gap's INFRA Grant program proposal to ease congestion related to freight transport and improve the quality of life for current and future residents.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

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