United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 19, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

We write to express our support for the Port of Hood River's application to the Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program.

The Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge replacement project is the top priority identified in the Columbia River Gorge region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The original interstate bridge was constructed in 1924 and has become functionally obsolete over time, with no shoulders, no bicycle or pedestrian access, and travel lanes that are barely nine feet wide. The bridge carries a sufficiency rating of less than 48 and the closest alternate crossings are more than 20 miles away in both directions. Bi-state efforts to replace the 96-year-old structure have been underway for nearly 30 years.

We believe this project is fully consistent with the goals and priorities of the BUILD program. Completing necessary engineering and design work, and ultimately replacing the bridge, will greatly benefit economic productivity and quality of life in the region.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Port of Hood River's application for this project. If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact Dan Mahr in Senator Merkley's office at 503-201-4709; or Jacob Egler in Senator Wyden's office at 541-330-9142 or Bree Rabourn in Senator Murray's office at 206-553-0724; or Madison Brown in Senator Cantwell's office at 206-220-6389.

Sincerely,

Ron Wyden
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
Jeffery A. Merkley
United States Senator

Patty Murray
Patty Murray
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
Maria Cantwell
United State Senator