



September 5, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

Recently, the Board of Director's for one of the largest Chambers of Commerce in the State of Michigan (over 1,200 member businesses and organizations), the **Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry**, passed a resolution, fully supporting the Innovate Mound initiative to provide infrastructure improvements that lead to job creation, talent attraction, and business growth.

We collectively write in support of a joint application by Macomb County and the Cities of Sterling Heights and Warren, Michigan, for a \$130,100,000 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant for the Mound Road Industrial Corridor Technology and Innovation Project to transform 9 miles of the 8-lane Mound Road Corridor in the Cities of Warren and Sterling Heights – the 3rd and 4th largest cities in Michigan with a combined population of 265,000 – from a 30-year-old roadway strewn with potholes and a decaying roadbed to a next-generation critical commercial corridor, providing reduced congestion and greater safety for the aerospace, defense, and auto manufacturing employers and freight movement on the corridor; cutting-edge vehicle-to-vehicle technology for automobiles and trucks on the corridor; and greater safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

The 9 miles of Mound Road connecting to I-696 and State Route M-59 are a major industrial corridor – with over 81,000 manufacturing jobs in a 10-mile radius - featuring vital national automotive, aerospace, defense, and advanced manufacturing installations, including the Warren General Motors Technical Center, the Sterling Heights Ford Axle Plant, the Sterling Heights Chrysler Assembly Plant, and the U.S. Army's Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) and Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) facilities.

The estimated total cost of the Mound Technology and Innovation Corridor Project is \$217 million. Consistent with the goals of the INFRA grant program, this transformative project will significantly improve the infrastructure – including next generation intelligent transportation systems deployment - on the Mound Road Corridor, thereby allowing workers and freight to move more efficiently through the corridor to the many nationally-critical employers located there. It will also improve access to alternative forms of transportation by constructing a contiguous bike/ped pathway along the corridor with links to nearby trails and add transit stops to the corridor.

We strongly support our local community leaders as they work to replace critical infrastructure and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Eastern Michigan, an area which is working hard to maintain and attract vital manufacturing jobs for which a strong functioning transportation infrastructure is a key criterion. I would greatly appreciate your careful consideration of this grant application by Macomb County and the Cities of Sterling Heights and Warren, Michigan.

Respectfully,

Melanie Davis
President / CEO
Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce

Nathan Tallman
Chairman of the Board
Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce



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