



July 3, 2019

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

Re: Support for the Gallia County Connectivity Project

Dear Secretary Chao:

The purpose of this letter is to express our support for the BUILD grant application submitted by the Gallia County, Ohio Engineer's Office aimed at developing an east-west connectivity corridor. The project consists of adding an interchange along US Route 35 while utilizing an existing overpass bridge and four rest-area ramps and developing a State Route 7 bypass route along Bob Evans Highway/Farm Road to alleviate costly impacts to businesses and residents from flooding. Included in the project is the addition of two electric charging stations, developing a smart trucking rest area, and installing fiber optics to provide a two-lane testing route for the Ohio autonomous vehicle project along the same US 35/Bob Evans Highway/Farm Road bypass route. The two development areas along US Route 35 include both Harrisburg Road and Bob Evans Highway/Farm Road.

These areas provide two innovative public/private partnerships to install electric charging stations for over-the-road trucks and passenger vehicles and for the installation of fiber optics. The fiber optic connectivity will support the Drive Ohio autonomous vehicle project, high tech industrial development and trucking industry expansion in the Southeast Ohio. The project provides connectivity to areas along the Ohio River for innovative rural vehicle testing tracks and to the States of West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio.

The interchange project will include increasing the parking capacity for commercial trucks "resting" to meet the USDOT requirements to ensure safety to the public and for the drivers. The project also provides a needed stopping point for trucks for the maximum ten-hour drive-time requirement.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these innovative improvements to the prosperity of southeastern Ohio.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Marchbanks".

Jack Marchbanks, Ph.D., Director