



July 11, 2018

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

Re: Madera County Transportation Commission's BUILD Grant Application for State Route 99

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the eight county San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies' Directors' Committee, we proudly support the Fiscal Year 2018 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grant program application for safety and mobility improvements for State Route 99 in Madera County, from Avenue 12 to Avenue 17.

The San Joaquin Valley is the heart of California's transportation system, and is a major generator of economic activity within California. The San Joaquin Valley accounts for 25 percent of all food produced in the United States, and a majority, roughly 92 percent, of our commodities are transported by truck, primarily using State Route 99 and other major corridors. This project is critical to not only Madera County, but the entire Valley, as we move the region's \$35 billion export-oriented agriculture to markets in California and throughout the Nation.

State Route 99 is the backbone of the San Joaquin Valley's agricultural economy, and is part of the National Highway Freight Network. Improvements to the Madera County segments of State Route 99 are needed to improve safety, reduce congestion, increase connectivity of the highway system, and preserve acceptable facility operations. Safety and mobility along State Route 99 is severely hampered by the numerous "bottlenecks" that occur throughout this highway corridor. The BUILD funding will allow for the northern Madera County portion of State Route 99 to be improved, and be consistent, with other segments of State Route 99.

We understand there are many high priority projects across the country, but we hope you will pay close attention to the unique national benefits that come from investing in State Route 99. The BUILD grant is needed to fully fund construction for this shovel ready project. We appreciate your consideration of this important application for our region. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

TONY BOREN, Executive Director
Fresno Council of Governments
Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies' Directors' Committee

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