

United States Senate

August 7, 2018

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

RE: Support for Madera County Transportation Commission's BUILD Grant Application.

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write to support the Madera County Transportation Commission's application to the BUILD Grant Program to fund the *Madera Region State Route 99 (SR-99) Widening Project* (the Project).

State Route 99 (SR-99) is a critical stretch of highway in Madera County that supports a \$35 billion export-based agriculture industry in California's San Joaquin Valley. This region produces \$1 billion in agricultural goods every year and accounts for approximately 30% of jobs in Madera County alone. Planned development and regional population growth in the area has led to traffic congestion and deteriorated operations along State Route 99, causing the facility to operate at a Level of Service (LOS) D. Absent any intervention or remedy, freeway conditions will worsen and State Route 99 will operate at a LOS E by 2020.

To help improve traffic conditions and bolster highway safety in Madera County, the Commission proposes to widen SR-99 from 4 to 6 lanes for 8 miles between Avenue 12 and Avenue 17. This increased connectivity to agribusiness manufacturing and processing facilities would improve the free flow of goods and business to and from the San Joaquin Valley and alleviate existing strains on the local transportation network. The creation of approximately 1,000 construction jobs over a two-year period will also help reduce Madera County's unemployment rate, which is currently 8.4%. This Project represents a competitive investment in the San Joaquin Valley's transportation network with over 87% of funding already secured through non-Federal sources.

I recommend the Department fund Madera County Transportation Commission's application at the proposed \$13,000,000 level pursuant to all existing rules and regulations. It

is critical that our Nation provide local, state, and regional partners with the necessary support to facilitate safe, efficient, and reliable goods movement well into the future.

My office is prepared to respond to any questions or concerns regarding this matter. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Respectfully,



KAMALA D. HARRIS

United States Senator