

June 3, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing, on behalf of MCI Metro Access Transmission Services Corp., to offer our support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) *I-85/I-40/NC-540 Foundations for Safer and Automated Transportation (FAST)* application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD Program.

The I-85/I-40/NC-540 corridor is critical to east-west long-distance travel regionally and is vital for local trips between three of North Carolina's major metropolitan areas. This project, when combined with other recent grant applications, demonstrates how complementary investments and a coordinated strategy can improve corridor performance, user safety, freight mobility, and digital connectivity of communities in central North Carolina.

We understand that the project elements will benefit the transportation system in the state:

1. Completes the NCDOT fiber-optic backbone from Raleigh to Charlotte, allowing operations personnel and first responder's immediate and reliable access to a variety of traffic management systems.
2. Supports the eventual interconnection of freight facilities.
3. Supports the deployment of connected and automated vehicle technology.
4. Introduces new state-of-the-art technology to improve traffic safety along the heavily traveled corridor, by focusing on risky driver behavior and non-ideal road conditions. For example, the project deploys counter-measures at selected interchanges to deter wrong-way driving onto our freeways.
5. Provides the potential for improved cutting-edge broadband access to both urban and rural communities along the corridor.

MCI provides critical communications services to businesses and Verizon's Wireless Network across North Carolina, and is currently investing millions of dollars to strengthen, expand, and improve its networks across the state. The FAST project, especially completing the fiber backbone from Raleigh to Charlotte, will help provide the necessary foundation for next-generation technology and innovation in North Carolina — growing its economy and improving the everyday lives of its citizens.

These are just a few of the many reasons we strongly support the NCDOT I-85/I-40/NC-540 application. We fully endorse the plans and goals of the project and will work with NCDOT as needed during the implementation and operation phases of the project.

Thank you for your consideration of this BUILD grant request from NCDOT. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact Chris Werner, PE at [cmwerner@ncdot.gov](mailto:cmwerner@ncdot.gov) or at 919-707-2540.

Sincerely,



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