

June 12, 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 Segra, one of the largest independent fiber network infrastructure companies in the eastern U.S., 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 the how 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 responders 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.

As one of many high-tech companies to recently establish our headquarters in North Carolina, we realize how the region serves as technology hub for national and local communications and commerce. Meanwhile, families and companies are moving to the region in record numbers and relying on a telecommunications network that lacks the capacity and reliability for today's demand. Infrastructure that does not keep pace with population growth and technology advancements, is a threat to the safety, prosperity and quality of life of the region's citizens.

If done right, the fiber-optic backbone project along I-85/I-40/NC-50 will link North Carolina's major metropolitan areas providing thousands of communities and millions of citizens with a state-of-the-art network that could support our modern life for years to come. And by partnering with private industry,

it would also provide an affordable, reliable and alternative route for one of the busiest network hubs in the U.S. This would allow carriers to transport critical, life-saving communications in times of local and national emergencies.

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 me via my email or number below or Chris Werner, PE at cmwerner@ncdot.gov or at 919-707-2540.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Guerra".

Greg Guerra

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President and Chief Operating Officer

Segra

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