

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 18, 2018

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

SUBJECT: Growing Rural Economy and Agriculture through Transportation & Technology Enhancement or Replacement in North Carolina Project (GREATTER-NC), 2018 BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to you in support of the 2018 BUILD Capital Grant Application submitted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the GREATTER-NC Project, a rural access and mobility project.

The GREATTER-NC Project directly addresses the dual challenge of improving physical and digital connectivity in North Carolina's rural communities. The Project will reconstruct approximately 70 bridges located in 17 of the most rural and economically depressed counties across the state, potentially adding broadband capability to a number of the structures as they are rebuilt. Nearly 20 of these bridges include weight restrictions that result in large or heavy vehicles taking detours to avoid crossing them, or to only partially load their trucks, leading to more trips and more trucks on these roads. Removing the weight restrictions by replacing these bridges will reduce transportation costs for agricultural and other commercial shippers. Additionally, the increased access will help bring greater economic competitiveness to these rural areas.

The broadband capability will benefit other important infrastructure projects being made independently in the state, namely the future Carolina Connector Intermodal Terminal, which will be located in an area without current broadband capability. The addition of broadband will allow this terminal to improve coordination with shippers and other transportation assets to more effectively serve as a freight hub.

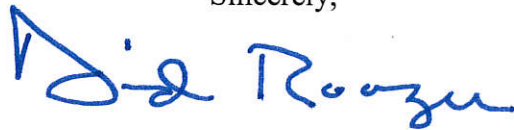
While the project addresses multiple evaluation criteria for the BUILD program, improving the economic competitiveness of North Carolina's rural communities lies at the heart of this project. According to the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office, 95 percent of state residents lacking broadband access reside in rural areas. Many internet applications require

higher speed internet capability, meaning rural households and businesses reliant on dial-up or lower speed services are effectively closed off from parts of the digital economy.

Construction of North Carolina's GREATTER-NC project will improve physical and digital connectivity in North Carolina's rural communities and will ultimately serve every facet of the North Carolina's Department of Transportation's mission to "connect people and places in North Carolina - safely and efficiently, with accountability and environmental sensitivity."

I appreciate the difficult decisions you will have to make when considering these grant awards. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "R".