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RANKING MEMBER, HOMELAND SECURITY
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October 30, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write to express my strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation INFRA grant proposal for I-95/U.S. 70 Innovative Technology and Rural Mobility Corridor Improvements. This investment in the infrastructure of Eastern North Carolina will have a long-lasting, positive impact on the economy, mobility, rural development, and safety in the region.

The I-95 section of the project will increase safety, bring key portions of the facility into a state of good repair and up to current design standards, add capacity and increase the flow of traffic. These improvements will ensure connections between the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, military installations, and international ports on the eastern seaboard are maintained and enhanced.

The U.S. 70 (future I-42) portion of the project completes the last two remaining gaps between I-40 and the eastern terminus of the Havelock Bypass to bring the entire route to freeway standards. This would represent the culmination of a decades-long effort to develop this facility to bolster Eastern North Carolina's economy and improve the existing evacuation route along U.S. 70 utilized during severe storms.

One of the most important aspects of this project is the innovative use of a conduit and fiber backbone along these portions of the I-95 and U.S. 70, which will enable high-speed broadband service within these critical corridors. This infrastructure improvement will provide capacity for current and future needs, allow for modernization of public safety centers, and facilitate the safe deployment of connected and autonomous vehicles.

Moreover, this fiber optic backbone will dramatically improve communications with citizens during emergency situations, such as providing quick detour routes in real-time, evacuation suggestions, and general traffic alerts. In addition, rural communities in eastern North Carolina could benefit by working with local Internet Service Providers to tap into the fiber backbone laid down along the corridor. New access to quality, high-speed broadband could enhance the economic competitiveness of rural areas and communities.

For these reasons, I support this application and urge you to give it all due consideration during the upcoming grant review process. As the Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, I look forward to continuing to work with you to advance our nation's transportation priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Price". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DAVID E. PRICE
Member of Congress