

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 1, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I recently learned the North Carolina Department of Transportation has submitted an INFRA grant proposal for I-95/US 70 Innovative Technology and Rural Mobility Corridor Improvements. While the I-95 and US 70 components of the Project can stand independently as beneficial to the state, even greater benefits can be realized if the two investments are jointly made.

The planned I-95 section of the Project will increase safety, bring key portions of the facility 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 plans for the US 70 (future I-42) portion of the Project would complete the last two remaining gaps between I-40 and the eastern terminus of the Havelock Bypass, bringing the entire stretch of road up to freeway standards. This will be the culmination of a decades-long effort to serve Eastern North Carolina both economically and in times of need, as US 70 also functions an evacuation route.

Jointly, the plan to install the conduit and fiber backbone along these portions of I-95 and US 70 will provide capacity for current and future needs, allow for modernization of public safety centers, and provide the environment for connected and autonomous vehicles. The ITS features included in the Project would facilitate detours when adverse circumstances close I-95 for hours at a time. The communications coverage provided with US 70 and I-95 could easily be extended to include the southern portion of US 117 between I-40 and US 70. Collectively, by wiring this "triangle" near the center of I-95 as it traverses the state, NCDOT would have the ability to analyze and manage traffic capacity in real time using the IT enhancements in response to crash and natural hazard events.

I recognize the difficult decisions you have to make when considering these applications, and I greatly appreciate your consideration of this one. I am convinced this combined project will have a long-lasting, positive impact on the economy, mobility, and safety in Eastern North Carolina.

Sincerely,

