

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

James A. Porter
President and Publisher
GateHouse Ohio Media
500 Market Ave. S
Canton, OH 44702

Dear Madam Secretary:

As president and publisher of GateHouse Ohio Media, I am writing in support of our region's request for approval of the INFRA grant application that Stark, Carroll and Columbiana counties in Northeast Ohio together are submitting.

These counties have partnered to create a Regional Transportation Improvement Project, under a new Ohio law sponsored by our local state representative who understands the need for completing improvements along U.S. Route 30 from the Canton area east to the Pennsylvania border.

U.S. 30 is a four-lane, federal highway from Chicago to Canton, but a two-lane road — through some hilly countryside, with several stops and intersections especially dangerous for heavy-rig truck traffic — for more than 30 miles to the eastern edge of our state. Its current configuration inhibits not only local productivity, but also transportation on a national scale. It has left Canton as the only major manufacturing city in Ohio without four-lane highway access running in all four directions.

GateHouse Ohio Media — a group of three daily newspapers, five weekly newspapers, a magazine division and other print and digital media operations — relies on transportation along U.S. 30 several times a day, 365 days per year. Inbound deliveries of paper and other raw materials for our businesses, as well as outbound deliveries of our finished products, would be made much more efficient — and safe — with completion of U.S. 30 as a four-lane, limited-access highway from east of Canton to East Liverpool and into Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh-area markets.

Other local industries also would benefit from improvements of U.S. 30, and potential economic development has been, and will continue to be, stunted without this key transportation link.

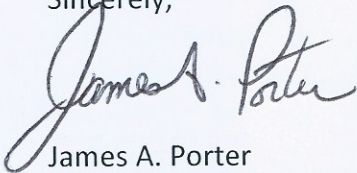
Our region is blessed with abundant natural gas resources, but getting the infrastructure completed to move the gas from the ground to the marketplace has been hindered by the lack of access for heavy equipment coming to and from the Utica Shale region. Also, the development of Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village, an \$800 million project tied to the Professional Football Hall of Fame, promises to boost tourism to the Canton area and beyond into all of Northeast Ohio.

The INFRA grant sought by the RTIP would support the necessary first steps in making needed improvements along U.S. 30 for the benefit of these and many other businesses large and small in this region.

The affected counties are working to do their part, under the RTIP structure, to create the public-private partnerships necessary to provide local funding.

We urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to grant financial support for improving U.S. 30 from Canton to Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James A. Porter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

James A. Porter
GateHouse Ohio Media
President and Publisher