

October 25, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to you to express the Akron-Canton Airport's support of a INFRA grant application submitted by Stark, Carroll and Columbiana counties in northeast Ohio. These counties have created a Regional Transportation Improvement Project under Ohio law with the goal of finally completing the improvement of U.S. Route 30 to the eastern edge of Ohio. The airport serves over 1.4 million passengers annually and has been a major economic driver for the region.

First step is to bypass the city of East Canton, where heavy truck-trailer traffic now jogs twice through downtown. This first step would run from Trump Avenue NE in Canton to Ohio Route 44. It is a four-mile project estimated to cost \$90 million to \$100 million. The entire project is estimated at \$800 million to \$1 billion. The INFRA grant sought by the RTIP would support the necessary first step.

U.S. Route 30 is a four-lane commercial highway from Chicago to Canton, Ohio, and a two-lane, winding and hilly country road for the 32 miles that takes it to the eastern edge of the state and the fringe of the Pittsburgh market. This condition stifles economic growth. It denies a four-lane thoroughfare through the northern counties of the Utica Shale energy development in Ohio. It inhibits the shipment of manufactured goods from Canton, and points west, to the Ohio River port at Wellsville, Ohio. It creates a tourism disadvantage for the \$700 million Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village under development around the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton. With the exception of Cleveland, which sits on the shore of Lake Erie, Canton is the only major manufacturing city in Ohio without four-lane highway access running north, south east and west. However, it will also allow easier access to the air transportation system for those wishing to fly from the Akron-Canton Airport.

We support this improvement for the reasons stated above and hope that you and the Department of Transportation will support the INFRA Grant application for this vital project.

Sincerely,

Richard B. McQueen
President & CEO