

Stark County Commissioners



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October 22, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Richard Regula, President

Bill Smith

Janet Weir Creighton

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Brant A. Luther, Esq.

We are writing to express strong support for the request by the Regional Transportation Improvement Project (RTIP), a public agency serving the Ohio Counties of Carroll, Columbiana and Stark, for Federal funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant program. This funding would be used to extend a critical expressway segment (US 30/Lincoln Highway) east of Canton in Stark County from Trump Avenue, East to SR 44. This highway corridor improvement project is critically important to promote highway safety, and has broad national implications for improving surface transportation, commerce, trade and quality of life to benefit businesses and communities in our region.

A US 30 expressway east of Canton will improve safety, especially for trucks. The expressway will avoid the curves and tight turns of the existing two-lane Route 30, which has safety deficiencies. Because of the high risk of an accident, many trucking companies refuse to allow their drivers to operate trucks on the existing, winding US 30, negatively affecting logistics efficiencies and transportation costs for regional businesses and consumers. Surveys of these companies indicate that their trucks' use of US 30 westbound from eastern Ohio – and likely from western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia – would increase if the highway were upgraded.

The RTIP project will benefit businesses and communities, including rural counties in the Appalachian region, by improving highway access for movement associated with goods and services, including commerce related to the oil and gas industry in the Marcellus and Utica shale plays in our region. These plays are currently the focus of plans for major expansion of operations by oil and gas, chemicals and plastics industries, all of which require reliable truck access.

Extending the US 30 expressway east of Canton has the potential to pull additional traffic through Stark and Columbiana counties and generate economic growth, new business opportunities and jobs for local companies and residents along this route.

We respectfully request that The Department of Transportation strongly consider the importance of this project with associated improvements for the US 30 Corridor.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Richard Regula in blue ink.

Richard Regula
Stark County Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Bill Smith in blue ink.

Bill Smith
Stark County Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Janet Weir Creighton in blue ink, with a circular stamp around it.

Janet Weir Creighton
Stark County Commissioner