

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

In support of the multi-state effort to complete I-69, we applaud the comments of President Biden on the need to move quickly on federal legislation to reauthorize surface transportation authorities and thus to provide critical support to businesses and local communities during this unprecedented coronavirus pandemic. As we work with your Department on an extension of those transportation authorities, we urge that the Administration assist in developing new policies to add capacity to the Nation's interstates, and advance strategic projects of national significance, such as I-69.

I-69 has been under development for more than twenty-five years. The prolonged timeline is due largely to insufficient funding and the lack of guaranteed federal match, unlike when the interstate system was originally developed. When complete, I-69 will provide the most direct and seamless interstate service from Port Huron, Michigan, through Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and connecting with Gulf Coast strategic seaports, as well as key ports of entry at Laredo and the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The merits of I-69 as a strategic multi-modal, multi-state freight corridor that will facilitate international trade and also bring interstate access and improved safety to hundreds of rural communities persist and are increasingly important to the nation today.

We believe all Congressionally designated Future Interstates that are included in a state's USDOT-approved Freight Plan should be eligible for NHFP formula funding. Also, all projects that are eligible for Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Project program grants (INFRA) should be eligible for formula funding received by each state under the NHFP. This would incorporate all highways now on the National Highway System. Finally, MAP-21 should be amended to remove the requirement that segments to the Interstate System may only be added if there is a plan to connect to the Interstate System by 2037. Removing the requirement would be consistent with how the system was initially developed and would encourage more rapid completion of Future Interstates.

We thank you for your leadership during this challenging time for our country. We believe a renewed focus on U.S. transportation infrastructure will expediate our recovery efforts in the coming months. Therefore, we reiterate our support for increased federal investment in the development of I-69 and look forward to working with you to facilitate the completion of projects of national significance.

Sincerely,



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Jim Banks
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
André Carson
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Michael Cloud
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
James Comer
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

_____/s/
David Kustoff
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Lisa McClain
Member of Congress

_____/s/
John Moolenaar
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Troy E. Nehls
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Greg Pence
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Victoria Spartz
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress