



May 14, 2020

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

RE: City-County of Butte-Silver Bow and Port of Montana 2020 BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing on behalf of the Butte Local Development Corporation to express our strong support for the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow and the Port of Montana's 2020 BUILD transportation grant application to secure funding for vital rail and road expansion.

A \$6.4 Million investment of BUILD funds will help leverage \$2.4 Million of local match dollars. These funds will compliment an additional \$7.0 Million of local investment in transloading, storage, lead and spur tracks planned in the next 3-6 months. With the help of BUILD funds, the final development phase for the area will be able to break ground in early 2021, having significant impact on commerce and transportation options throughout Montana and the region.

Located at the intersection of two interstate highways and two Class I railroads, the Port of Montana and Montana Connections Business Development Park are ideally located for manufacturing and transportation. Current rail capacity is limiting activities at the Port of Montana and forcing them to turn down new business opportunities. Additionally, the lack of rail served industrial sites within the Montana Connections Park has restricted what types of companies and operations they are able to attract. Completing this project will alleviate both restrictions and allow both entities to reach their full potential.

As the regions lead economic development organization, the BLDC has a tremendous understanding of the important role that the connection park plays not only for Butte but also for all of Montana. The jobs that this project supports and the economic impact that the park has is critical to the success of our region and for delivering trade across Montana. Our community thrives because of the many great businesses that call the connections park home and the addition of rail will help us continue to grow and expand our economic options in Butte and Southwestern Montana.

We strongly urge your approval of this grant application. Additional infrastructure will assist current Montana shippers and encourage business investment resulting in new job creation and economic benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

Joe Willauer

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