



July 10, 2019

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

RE: City and County of Butte-Silver Bow and Port of Montana 2019 BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing on behalf of Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board and staff to express our strong support for the City and County of Butte-Silver Bow and Port of Montana's United States Department of Transportation's 2019 BUILD grant application to secure funding for vital rail and road expansion.

The Port of Montana and Montana Connections Business Development Park are proposing to add rail infrastructure at both locations and expand road development within the business park. The Montana Connections Business Development Park is an industrial park with large tracts of land available for development and is an economic driver in our region, as it is home to some of our largest employers. Currently, Montana Connections does not have the ability to attract businesses that requires direct rail service. Adding rail served industrial sites will enable Montana Connections to attract those businesses that require rail service for their operations. The Port of Montana is a full service public transfer and warehousing facility. The proposed investment will help increase the Port of Montana's transload and distribution activities. This project will help to meet the goals and objectives of the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy by continuing to build the foundation of a new diversified economy; once entirely based on natural resource extraction.

A \$7.7 Million investment of BUILD funds will help leverage \$1.4 Million of match dollars to see this project's completion. With the help of these funds, this project, will have significant impact on commerce and transportation options throughout Montana. Due to its strategic location on both the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads and at the intersections of Interstates 15 and 90, the Port of Montana and Montana Connections Business Development Park is the ideal location for manufacturing and transportation in the region. However, the Port of Montana is currently at rail capacity and recently, has been forced 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 grow.

We strongly urge your approval of this grant application. The investment in infrastructure is critical for economic diversification in Southwest Montana. The development will assist current Montana shippers, as well as encourage new and existing businesses, to invest in their own

growth resulting in new job creation and increased local tax dollars, while continuing to improve the region's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Lori Casey
Planning Director