

July 3, 2019

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 2019 BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao,

My name is Harold "Chip" Ray. I am the President of Western States Asphalt, LLC (WSA), with our corporate office in Spokane, WA, and five asphalt terminals and manufacturing locations in three Western states, ID, WA and WY. WSA is finalizing an agreement with Butte-Silver Bow (BSB) to build our sixth manufacturing facility in the Port of Montana. We are a leading regional provider of paving asphalt and asphalt emulsions for roadway construction and maintenance serving seven states.

Our raw materials are typically received by rail, and finished products are shipped by truck. The Port of Montana offers a unique location where both U.S. class 1 railroads, the UP and BNSF, along with the proximity to two major interstate freeways, I-90 and I-15. This allows the most efficient sourcing of raw materials by rail and provides quick and easy access to major interstates for outbound shipping. It is for this reason that WSA has selected this site for future expansion.

Because of these unique transportation and business benefits associated with this site, I am writing you to express our strong support for the City-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. A \$7.7 Million investment of BUILD funds will help leverage \$1.4 Million of local match dollars. These funds will compliment an additional \$7.2 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 2020, having significant impact on commerce and transportation options throughout Montana and the region.

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

Sincerely,

Chip Ray

President
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