



May 5, 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,

On behalf of Headwaters RC&D Area, Inc, I am writing 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. Headwaters RC&D is the Regional Economic Development Organization that supports 7 counties in South West Montana.

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 regional EDO, we recognize the importance of cultivating a thriving transportation hub in Southwest Montana. The expansion of the rail and road in the Port of Montana and the Montana Connections Park will support the tremendous commitment that Butte Silver Bow has already made to improve the local economy, transportation infrastructure and air quality. Additional infrastructure will assist current Montana shippers and encourage business investment resulting in new job creation and economic benefits for the region.

We strongly urge your approval of this grant application.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Julie Jaksha
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Regional Director
Headwaters RC&D