



October 13, 2017

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

Re: Support for the Rickenbacker Inland Port TIGER Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

Founded in 1884, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice of business within the 11-county Columbus Region, with more than 1,400 members employing over 500,000 workers. A focus of the Chamber's government relations efforts centers on Transportation and Infrastructure, advocating for a fully integrated and advanced multi-modal transportation network to facilitate and advance the growth and sustainability of the region's logistics, manufacturing, and related industries. The Columbus Region Logistics Council (CRLC), an initiative of the Columbus Chamber, includes a diverse group of 120 member companies that span the supply chain and logistics industries. Our membership represents area companies that are committed to the growth and sustainability of the logistics industry in Central Ohio, and to the economic wellbeing of the region in general.

The Columbus Chamber and CRLC are pleased to jointly submit this letter of support for the Columbus Regional Airport Authority's TIGER grant application aimed at improving workforce access to employment sites within the Columbus region's growing Rickenbacker Inland Port, and relieving congestion to and from the port.

This \$40+ million investment is of great importance to Chamber members, employees, and the business community at large. The number of employees currently working in the area is expected to more than double to over 50,000 in 2040, making safety, reliability, and affordable transportation a workforce priority. For existing businesses to thrive, and to attract new ventures to the area, reducing congestion is a priority.

The Rickenbacker Inland Port Workforce Access project includes three major components:

1. **Alum Creek Drive:** The majority of truck traffic leaving the inland port area travels east and west on I-70 reached via I-270. Strengthening this connection and the port's access to the interstate system requires **expansion of Alum Creek Drive**. A component of USDOT's National Primary Freight Highway System (PHFS) and a state-designated and federally-accepted National Highway System (NHS) Intermodal Connector Route, Alum Creek Drive is a critical freight corridor for the region. Widening Alum Creek Drive is a priority for the Chamber due to continued complaints from area businesses about increased congestion. Not only is safety a concern, but the operations of local businesses are also being adversely affected. The traffic influx has created delays in transport and employee availability. Chamber members are developing creative ways

to address these challenges, such as moving shifts to non-traditional start times to ease employee transportation to and from the workplace.

1. **Trail Connection:** A new trail of fewer than 2 miles in length has the potential to connect the new shared-use path on Alum Creek Drive connecting the Rickenbacker Inland Port area to neighborhoods throughout Columbus.
2. **Transit & Bike Share:** A suite of small improvements will upgrade existing stops by the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and the GREAT area shuttle service including pull-outs, sidewalk connections, and bike share for first and last mile connections.

Infrastructure improvements to the Rickenbacker Inland Port were identified as a top priority for the Columbus Chamber and our regional and state partners. Improvements are critical to efficient freight movement throughout Columbus and the Midwest megaregion and therefore the retention and growth of the region's established businesses and their employees, and business attraction that will lead to new job creation.

For the aforementioned reasons, we respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of our region's most important economic generator, the Rickenbacker Inland Port.

Sincerely,



Don DePerro
President & CEO