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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3605

July 18, 2018

Secretary Elaine Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to draw your attention to the application submitted by Gallia County, Ohio, for the Appalachian Ohio Infrastructure Gateway Project as you consider application for the U.S. Department of Transportation Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grant Program.

The Appalachian Ohio Infrastructure Gateway Project would replace 130 miles of stone/dirt country roads with a hard substance, improving the quality of life for its residents and improving the reliability and ease of access in this region. The pavement design is being developed by a research project with Ohio University, and its innovative model will reduce the cost of this major road replacement. The project will also provide main line fiber connections to facilitate secondary road vehicle testing. This fiber investment would impact 400 square miles in Southeastern Ohio that are in need of economic development and opportunity.

Unfortunately, the communities in this area experience frequent road closures and trouble accessing jobs, medical care, schools, food, and emergency response services due to the condition of the stone and dirt county roads in the area. These road closures have also inhibited the ability to get agricultural products to market. Further, the stone and dirt roads have negatively impacted the air quality in the area. Dust from these roads are thought to have contributed to dust allergies, severe breathing problems including asthma, and other serious health issues among adults and children. Resurfacing these roads would greatly improve road quality, health, and safety.

The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) and the County Engineer Association of Ohio included the upgrading of stone and dirt county roads on their annual legislative agendas. Gallia County has partnered with a number of entities, including the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), OFBF, the Federal Highway Administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission, Eastern Federal Lands, and the US Department of Agriculture, on upgrading these roads.

Please give the Appalachian Ohio Infrastructure Gateway Project application full and fair consideration as you evaluate submissions for BUILD Grant awards. For additional questions, please contact [Leah\\_Hill@brown.senate.gov](mailto:Leah_Hill@brown.senate.gov) in my office.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator