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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

July 8, 2019

Secretary Elaine Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to bring to your attention the application submitted by Gallia County, Ohio, for the FY 2019 U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grant program. The application asks for support for Gallia County's Rural Paving and Infrastructure Gateway Project.

The Rural Paving and Infrastructure Gateway Project would replace 130 miles of stone/dirt country roads with a hard substance, improving the quality of life as well as the reliability and ease of access in the region. The innovative model this project will use for the pavement design is being developed at Ohio University and will reduce the cost of this major road replacement.

Currently, due to the condition of the stone and dirt roads, the communities in this area experience frequent road closures. The road closures have led to difficulty accessing jobs, medical care, schools, food, and emergency response services as well as inhibiting the ability to get agricultural products to the market. Furthermore, the stone and dirt roads have negatively affected the air quality in the area, leading to health problems in the communities. Dust from these roads are thought to have contributed to dust allergies, asthma, and other serious health issues among children and adults. 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, OFBF, the Federal Highway Administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission, Eastern Federal Lands, and the US Department of Agriculture, on upgrading these roads.

I ask you to please give the Rural Paving and Infrastructure Gateway Project application full and fair consideration as you evaluate submissions for BUILD Grant awards. For additional questions, please contact my office.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator