



August 18, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT – TXDOT TIGER II GRANT APPLICATION, TOWER 55
MULTIMODAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Dear Secretary LaHood:

On behalf of the National Retail Federation (NRF), I am writing to express my strong support for the Texas Department of Transportation's (TXDOT) application for Tiger II discretionary funds to support the Tower 55 Multimodal Improvement Project.

As the world's largest retail trade association and the voice of retail worldwide, the National Retail Federation's global membership includes retailers of all sizes, formats and channels of distribution as well as chain restaurants and industry partners from the U.S. and more than 45 countries abroad. In the U.S., NRF represents the breadth and diversity of an industry with more than 1.6 million American companies that employ nearly 25 million workers and generated 2009 sales of \$2.3 trillion.

Tower 55, in Fort Worth, TX, is a critically important freight and passenger rail gateway located along a key transportation trade corridor connecting the United States, Mexico and Canada. It has also become one of the most congested rail chokepoints in the nation's supply chain. Eleven major freight and passenger rail lines from across the country converge at Tower 55 into a single, four way at-grade intersection. More than 100 passenger and freight trains must travel through the intersection on peak days, with over 200 million tons of freight moving between North American markets each year. A significant portion of the intermodal containers offloaded within our port travels to the southeast United States on Union Pacific trains through Tower 55.

As proposed by TXDOT, and in partnership with BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Amtrak, the City of Fort Worth, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and the Fort Worth Transit Authority, the Tower 55 project will simultaneously address a number of key challenges for the local community, state and surrounding region. It will greatly enhance rail and motorist transportation flows through and around the intersection, improvements which will be felt up and down the affected trade corridors; address community safety and livability concerns; and promote national goals of energy

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savings and environmental conservation. The project epitomizes a successful public-private partnership, taking a carefully studied approach to achieve the shared long term objectives of all stakeholders in this investment.

TXDOT has made Tower 55 the highest priority infrastructure funding project in the state and we strongly encourage your careful consideration of the pending Tiger II grant application. With its potential for immediate job creation and long term economic, energy, environmental and safety benefits, we believe the project is well positioned to compete in for federal funding.

We appreciate this opportunity to express our support for this project and strongly urge your favorable consideration of the Tower 55 Multimodal Improvement Project application for TIGER II Discretionary Grant funding. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Gold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

Jonathan Gold
Vice President, Supply Chain and Customs Policy
National Retail Federation