

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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LON BURNAM
DISTRICT 90 • FORT WORTH

August 19, 2010

Mr. Ray LaHood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I write 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.

Tower 55 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 every day.

As proposed by TXDOT, and in partnership with BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Amtrak and the City of Fort Worth, the Tower 55 Multimodal Improvement 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 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.

This project is of particular interest to me because of the public health and safety hazards that congestion at Tower 55 poses to residents of my district. I frequently see elementary school kids *crossing the tracks underneath train cars*, and ambulances on their way to the hospital are held up waiting to get through the intersection. The pedestrian crossings and

intersection improvements under this plan would greatly alleviate those problems. Expedited train passage would also reduce harmful nitrous oxide and particulate matter emissions that my constituents breathe as trains idle, waiting to pass through the intersection.

TXDOT has made Tower 55 the highest priority infrastructure project in the state, and I strongly encourage your careful consideration of the pending Tiger II grant application. With its potential for immediate job creation and longer term economic, energy, environmental and safety benefits, I believe the project is a strong candidate for this round of Tiger funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for this project, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lon Burnam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lon Burnam