



STATE OF TEXAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARC VEASEY
MEMBER

COMMITTEES:
LAW ENFORCEMENT
GOVERNMENT REFORM
RULES & RESOLUTIONS

August 20, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The state of rail transportation is such that the city of Fort Worth cannot afford to lose out on additional funding opportunities. I therefore urge you to support grant funding for the final design, engineering, and permitting for the Tower 55 railroad intersection project in Fort Worth. This is the second time we have requested TIGER funding for the Tower 55 project, and I am pleased to report that railroads have increased their share of the funding to \$51.2 million, constituting 56% of the total funding for the project. It is my hope that with this additional assistance, the Tower 55 application will be funded.

Tower 55 is not just a rail transportation problem. It is a problem that affects public safety, public transportation, and public health in Fort Worth. The rail intersection at Tower 55 is so congested that each train that passes through the intersection (up to 190 freight and commuter trains a day), must come to a complete stop at the tower and wait from 15 to 90 minutes before continuing. As reported in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram on March 9, 2010, the delays often result in schoolchildren crawling under rail cars to reach their homes or elementary schools. Workers returning home at night must leave their cars on the opposite side of the tracks from their houses because their drive home is blocked by waiting trains. This is an unacceptable safety risk for our children and our community.

The delays at Tower 55 also prevent Fort Worth and the North Texas region from developing an adequate public transportation system. The cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, Arlington, and Grand Prairie respectively represent the 8th, 17th, 50th, and 144th largest cities in the United States and are home to over 2.5 million people. As these cities become more integrated and connected, our need for a public rail route to connect them becomes more apparent. The most economical and efficient way to do so is by adding commuter rail along the Union Pacific rail line that runs directly between downtown Fort Worth and downtown Dallas, crossing Arlington and Grand Prairie. This route would serve the citizens of the region who most need public transportation in order to have access to jobs and economic opportunity. It would also provide access to venues for

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special events in Arlington, Fort Worth, and Dallas. However, if Tower 55 remains a point of congestion, it will be impossible for this line to be utilized for public transportation. My constituents, and all of the citizens of North Texas, need these public transportation options.

The final problem arising from Tower 55 affects public health. North Texas is currently in a state of non-attainment under EPA ozone guidelines. High ozone levels have been shown to lead to increased asthma, respiratory system issues, and other health problems. By easing the congestion at Tower 55, we could attack sources of damaging ozone in two ways: directly, by eliminating ozone emitted by idling trains, and indirectly, by allowing for public transportation that would remove ozone emitting cars from our roads and highways. Limiting these emissions is vital in order to move North Texas into attainment and improve the health of its citizens.

Tower 55 and its related problems have reached a crisis point. In order to protect our city's public safety, improve public transportation, and protect public health, it is vital that we resolve the congestion at Tower 55 immediately. We cannot do so without funding from the federal government. Thank you for your time and your service to our country. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my Chief of Staff and General Counsel, Anne Hagan, at (817) 339-1430.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Veasey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Marc Veasey
State Representative
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