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State Representative H. Gilson Blair

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to you today to express my support for the Western Reserve Port Authority's application for funding in the FY20 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants Program. Funding will be used for the Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub, a strategic infrastructure initiative to capitalize on Lordstown's location at the intersection of multiple modes of transportation, broadband, and electrification to position the area as the premier regional warehousing and distribution hub.

Investing in this project would help invigorate Northeast Ohio, particularly the Mahoning Valley and Lordstown, areas that were sharply impacted by economic downturns. The Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub will deliver significant improvements in transportation safety, mobility, access, and reliability. Improvements will include an intermodal rail connection at Ohio Commerce Center, an autonomous truck circulator route, consolidation of the current split interchange configuration along the Ohio Turnpike at Lordstown, and a transfer yard for trailers at the Ohio Turnpike Lordstown interchange.

The Mahoning Valley has long been a center of industry. The Valley has experienced some tough economic times recently. However, over the past few years the Valley has seen many positive changes and is continuing to grow. The Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub will be a great way to continue that positive change by bringing jobs and economic opportunities to the Valley. This project will help the lives of the people in my district and all of the surrounding districts.

Further, the Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub would build off the existing investment in transportation infrastructure, and the private investment by companies such as General Motors (GM) & LG Chem, Lordstown Motors Corporation, and TJX Homegoods to name a few.

I urge you to give the Western Reserve Port Authority's grant application your fullest consideration and support as it presents a catalytic opportunity to bring federal dollars to the Mahoning Valley to aid in the region's ongoing economic recovery.

Respectfully,

Representative H. Gilson Blair,
Ohio House of Representatives, District 63