OHIO COMMERCE CENTER

April 28th, 2020
The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

We are writing to you today to express our 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.

Since we purchased Ohio Commerce Center in 2010, we have invested many millions of dollars to upgrade and integrate rail to build the local industrial base. That investment has attracted over $150m in other private investment creating 200+ solid jobs. This grant coupled with our future anticipated investment will help secure a stable and diversified employment base. As the largest rail yard in the region, we look forward to working with the Port Authority to improve and integrate rail efficiencies into the logistics of the region.

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 EV 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. **Existing inquiries make us believe there are more companies that would leverage the federal investment to locate and create jobs and opportunity here.**

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

Weurge 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,

George Bakeris (Owner)

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