FUND FOR OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE

WORKING TOWARD GROWTH & OPPORTUNITY

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to express the Fund for Our Economic Future's 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 have been 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 Fund for Our Economic Future is a Northeast Ohio funding alliance comprised of foundations, corporations, education institutions, business and civic organizations, government entities, and individuals who pool resources and know-how to advance economic growth and increased access to opportunity through improved job creation, job preparation and job access. The Smart Logistics Hub has significant potential to model the kind of coordination and alignment needed to support and attract employers and quality jobs.

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 Corp, 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,

Bethia Burke, President
Fund for Our Economic Future

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