YOUNGSTOWN WARREN REGIONAL CHAMBER

April 16th, 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 through the FY20 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants Program. Funding would 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 include an intermodal rail connection at the Ohio Commerce Center, 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.

As the lead economic development organization serving Mahoning and Trumbull counties, the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber (YWRC) recognizes the importance of this project and the potential of future development as result of this strategic investment. The YWRC is currently managing more than $4.1 billion of pending investment that could result in the creation of more than 3,000 new jobs. All of this private company investment could realize the direct benefit of being located near the Lordstown Smart Logistics Hub, and businesses may consider this to be part of their decision-making process. Additionally, there is a direct benefit to the companies already located in our market that may have an opportunity to expand as a result of the project improvements.

Furthermore, 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) and 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,

TOM HUMPHRIES, CEO

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