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October 10, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

The Goleta Chamber of Commerce supports the application of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments to the United States Department of Transportation's Transportation Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER 2017) competitive grant program for the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Corridor: Access to Opportunities project.

The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Corridor: Access to Opportunities project will provide multiple transportation improvements including the addition of a High Occupancy Vehicle Lane, new commuter rail service, intercity transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Considering the U.S. 101 as the only major highway connecting the central coast to both northern and southern California and an estimated county population growth from 432,895 to 507,000 people in 2035; it is critical that these transportation infrastructure improvements occur in a timely manner. Santa Barbara County has key trading partners in the San Joaquin Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, and Southern California and serves as a critical link for interregional goods movement. The corridor provides access from California's Central Coast agricultural operations to markets around the country.

This corridor currently operates with LOS F congested flow conditions for two to four hours daily and congestion is estimated to increase over ten hours per day by 2040. U.S. 101 and Interstate 5 are the only two north-south interregional highways between Los Angeles and San Francisco. When Interstate 5 is closed due to harsh weather conditions, traffic accidents, or other environmental hazards, U.S. 101 absorbs the excess volume of traffic and freight movement. The significant increase in traffic delays causes Santa Barbara traffic to flow onto the busy surface streets.

The Goleta Chamber of Commerce strongly believes the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Corridor: Access to Opportunities project is critically important to our community and the nation. The project will increase capacity and reduce congestion on US 101, improve interregional goods movement, increase safety and multi-modal access and create access to jobs. The project will help protect the economic viability, quality of life and environmental sustainability of the entire region by reducing travel delays, improving goods movement and providing employees with new multi-modal commute options. For these reasons and more, we STRONGLY SUPPORT the efforts of SBCAG to widen the US 101 freeway, we urge your support for a TIGER XI grant for this critical project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristen Miller", is written over a light blue background.

Kristen Miller
President/CEO

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