

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

July 12, 2018

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

Re: City of Spokane Valley's CRISI (FR-CRS-18-001) application for the Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am pleased to write in support of the City of Spokane Valley's application to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for their Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project. Once completed, this project will improve commercial and residential traffic flow, public safety, and quality of life for those living in the area.

The current at-grade railway-highway crossing at Pines Road poses problems to traffic, especially given the proposed growth in train traffic through the Spokane region. According to the Washington State Department of Transportation Washington State Rail Plan, almost 94% percent of Washington's east-west bulk cargo rail traffic travels through this corridor, with an average of 56 freight and two passenger trains daily, a rate which is expected to increase to 114 trains by 2035. People and freight are delayed an average of over 20,000 times per year at the roadway-railway crossing, totaling over 1,000 hours of gate-down time annually.

Spokane Valley's Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project will complete preliminary engineering and the NEPA process to for the grade separation, as well as improvements to the adjacent Pines Road and Trent Avenue intersection. Replacing this crossing will eliminate the risk of fatalities, serious injuries, and road-related commodity spills that can occur at at-grade crossings, and eliminate potential barriers to emergency vehicles access.

In addition to addressing traffic and safety issues, this project will improve quality of life for those in the region. By removing the intersection between the highway and railway, it will eliminate 58 daily train horns across a 2.1 mile section in a residential area of the city. It will also reduce fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions for vehicles idling in delayed traffic, and enhance access and reliability to over 150 acres of prime, buildable industrial and mixed-use properties.

Spokane Valley's Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project will efficiently, safely, and economically serve the City of Spokane Valley, Spokane County, and the Spokane region. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

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