

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As members of the State of Washington and State of Oregon Congressional Delegations, we are writing to express our strong support for the Cascadia High-Speed Rail Program and to request your assistance in securing a Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program grant agreement between the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to complete Step 2 of the program. We respectfully urge you to support the highest funding level appropriate to support WSDOT's proposed statement of work.

The Cascadia corridor of Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia spans 345 miles and is home to nearly 10 million people. We anticipate nearly 4 million additional residents in the region by 2050. To accommodate this growth, the region will need a robust multimodal transportation infrastructure. The proposed high speed rail corridor could transport people between Seattle and Portland in less than an hour, creating critical additional capacity. Planning for this growth now, rather than reacting to it later, will set our region and country on the best path to compete in the 21st Century and beyond.

Ever since the Cascadia High Speed Rail Program was accepted into the Corridor ID program, WSDOT and the FRA have been working together on a statement of work and budget for Step 2 of the program, which requires WSDOT to create a Service Development Plan, perform outreach, and conduct initial design activities. We appreciate the FRA's engagement and technical assistance as WSDOT develops a budget that reflects the necessary funding level to support the technical and engineering work, and conduct outreach to Tribal governments, local jurisdictions, community organizations and the public to build trust, create transparency, and address the questions posed by policymakers.

A 2022 report by the University of Washington found that high-speed rail projects are most successful when time is taken at the outset to advance both the engineering and public outreach efforts. This allows agencies to clearly explain the costs, impacts, including environmental and socioeconomic impacts, and operational constraints and to establish the appropriate governance structures. Federal support to conduct the due diligence to demonstrate the feasibility of a project of this magnitude is essential.

To avoid the challenges experienced by other high-speed rail projects across the nation, it is critically important that the initial planning and outreach is done the right way. Hamstringing the project with a reduced budget may save money today but could be costly in the long run. The State of Washington and private sector have already dedicated over \$150 million to support the planning and development of high-speed rail along the Cascadia corridor, including \$25 million for Step 2 of the Corridor ID program. Therefore, we request your full and fair consideration of the project's Step 2 budget request and sufficient federal funding for which there are state match funds already committed. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



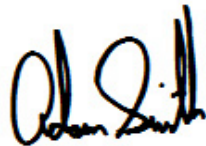
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



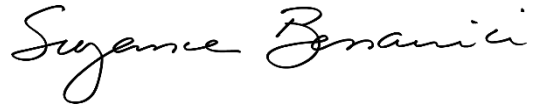
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress