

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write in support of the proposal submitted by the Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District (SEAEDD) and its partners for funding under the FY 2019 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant program to construct the Southeast Arkansas and Northeast Louisiana Multimodal Freight Corridor Improvement Project.

SEAEDD, the Port of Lake Providence, LA and the Madison Parish Port, LA are located along an approximately 100-mile stretch of the Mississippi River between McGehee in rural Southeast Arkansas and Tallulah in rural Northeast Louisiana. This stretch is also served by a parallel 91.3-mile short line railroad that interfaces directly with the Port of Lake Providence and Madison Parish Port, and will soon serve an additional rail connection to the Port of Yellow Bend near Arkansas City, AR.

Funds will be used to modernize rail infrastructure in order to increase the speed, safety and overall efficiency of the rail system, and to improve connectivity between three inland ports. These improvements will reduce shipping costs and provide customers of the ports with a cost-effective alternative for delivering commodities and manufactured goods to market. Greater connectivity for producers and shippers with the region's inland waterway ports will provide a new economic development tool and increased opportunities for a historically underserved area of the country.

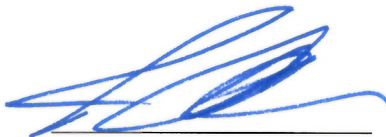
Increasing commercial rail and barge traffic is critical to economic growth in this region and throughout the nation. This proposal is a great example of a multimodal transportation project that improves existing infrastructure in a rural area and will provide much needed economic benefits to this region as well as manufacturers and end-users in connected markets.

As you continue to evaluate proposals to improve and rebuild our Nation's infrastructure, we ask that you give all due consideration to this project for funding under the INFRA Grant program. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator



Ralph Abraham, M.D.
U.S. Representative