February 25, 2019

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

SUBJECT: FY 2019 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program – Regional ExpressLane Accelerator: I-105 HOT Lanes

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the largest and most influential business organization in Los Angeles County for 131 years, I am writing in strong support of the application submitted by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). Metro submitted the Regional ExpressLane Accelerator: I-105 HOT (High Occupancy Toll) Lanes project, also known as ExpressLanes, for the USDOT’s Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) competitive grant program. The application requests a $35 million INFRA grant to continue expanding on the highly successful I-10/I-110 ExpressLanes.

The I-105 is a pivotal east-west corridor, it connects Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and the I-710 and I-605 freeways, the nation’s critical freight arteries that enable both interstate and international commerce. On an average weekday, the severely congested I-105 carries between 200,000-250,000 vehicles at speeds averaging 20 miles per hour (mph) in the general purpose lanes and 23 mph in the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane during the PM peak period, which can last as long as six hours. The addition of ExpressLanes to the I-105 will improve mobility and travel time reliability through dynamic pricing of limited roadway capacity, yielding mobility benefits for both commuters and freight. It will also play a key role in preparing Southern California’s transportation network for the LA 2028 Olympics and Paralympics.

More than just a HOV-to-HOT lane conversion, the proposed project will incorporate cutting-edge technology aimed at improving operational and revenue performance. With the INFRA investment, the ExpressLanes would be completed by 2025 instead of 2029. This would enable the region to earlier realize congestion reduction benefits and generate revenue for reinvestment in the Regional ExpressLanes network buildout and transit improvements in the corridor, thereby leveraging federal dollars by several multiples in the long term.

The project completion in advance of the LA 2028 Olympics and Paralympics will make this project a high-visibility showcase for America’s commitment to world-class infrastructure and technological innovation as millions of international visitors, athletes, and media gather in Southern California, while reaping economic benefits for the region for many years to come.
For these reasons, we respectfully request USDOT approves this INFRA grant application, we appreciate your consideration and leadership. Please contact Public Policy Manager, Kendal Asuncion, with any questions at kasuncion@lachamber.com or 213-580-7518.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jessica Duboff
Vice President of Public Policy