February 19, 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 – America’s Global Freight Gateway: Southern California Multimodal Freight Network Project

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 America’s Global Freight Gateway: Southern California Multimodal Network Project application. The application seeks $56.16 million from the FY 2019 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program.

Efficiency and safety at the San Pedro Port Complex and the surrounding freight transportation system is critical to the regional, and national economy. It is the largest port complex in the Western Hemisphere, handling 40 percent of our nation’s imports and over 25 percent of our nation’s exports, among these commodities and industrial exports from America’s heartland. However, our freight transportation system is among the most congested in the nation, reducing the efficiency of freight movement and the competitiveness of American commerce in global markets. Due in part to this nationally significant freight movement on our highways, railroads and seaports, our region persistently suffers from significant productivity loss due to traffic congestion as well as alarmingly high rates of traffic fatalities and serious injuries resulting from roadway and grade crossing collisions.

The America’s Global Freight Gateway: Southern California Multimodal Freight Network Project is network of projects to be implemented by and through a partnership of the State of California, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO), San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG), Port of Los Angeles (POLA), and Port of Long Beach (POLB). The Project will improve safety, efficiency, and reliability at the nation’s leading container port complex, freight gateway and trade corridor. The Project includes four geographically and functionally connected component projects, all with significant merit on their own.

The project components will improve congestion and safety at key chokepoints on the federally designated “National Multimodal Freight Network” as follows:

- A hazardous and congested highway interchange on the federally designated National Highway Freight Network-Primary Highway System in and near the ports;
• Key components of the on-dock rail system within the ports connecting to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Union Pacific Railroad mainlines via the north-south Alameda Corridor owned by the ports;

• One of the most hazardous freight rail-highway crossing in Los Angeles County located on the east-west Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) Trade Corridor freight railroad main line connecting to the Alameda Corridor. Both rail corridors have been designated by Congress as “Corridors of National and Regional Significance.”

The coordinated component projects comprising the Project will reduce trucks-miles traveled, vehicle-hours of travel and congestion, and collisions directly on the National Highway Freight Network. The component projects can initiate construction well within the INFRA program obligation deadlines and the implementing agencies have committed a match of local, private and state funds totaling approximately 76 percent of the overall Project budget, about 1.5 times more than the minimum required.

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 kasuncanion@lachamber.com or 213-580-7518.

Sincerely,

Maria S. Salinas
President & CEO