July 11, 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 BUILD Program – Terminal Island (TI) Wye Rail Enhancement 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 over 130 years, I am writing in strong support of the Terminal Island (TI) Wye Rail Enhancement Project application. The application seeks $16 million from the FY 2019 Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program.

Efficiency at the San Pedro Port Complex is critical to ensure our regional, and national economy maintain its competitive edge. 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. The TI Wye Rail Enhancement Project will generate a number of benefits that include:

- Enhanced regional and national economic competitiveness of U.S. businesses seeking improved, reliable access to global markets;
- Improved efficiency and sustainability of goods movement operations at the Port of Long Beach, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 2.4 million truck trips by 2035;
- Expedited flow of exports out of agricultural and manufacturing centers and facilitate the import of goods into rural communities and urban centers throughout the U.S.;
- Support the San Pedro Bay Port Complex’s of moving 35 percent of goods via on-dock rail by adding approximately 10,000 feet of new tracks to the Port’s rail system.

The United States Department of Agriculture ranks the Port of Long Beach among the top 20 U.S. ports moving waterborne agricultural trade; the Port cumulatively supports $374 billion of total economic output across the U.S. economy. It plays a critical role in the regional and national economy, these enhancements will continue to increase its efficiency out economic output.
For these reasons, we respectfully request USDOT approves this BUILD 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,

Maria S. Salinas
President & CEO