



TULARE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Mission: to promote and enhance the viability of Tulare County agriculture.

Secretary Elaine Chao
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

May 7, 2020

RE: State Route 99/Commercial Interchange BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am pleased to support the \$16 million Better Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant request for the State Route 99 Interchange Project submitted by the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS).

State Route 99 is a major corridor used by both trucks and commuters between communities and rural agricultural areas throughout the San Joaquin Valley. It is also the main link that connects the San Joaquin Valley with the Sacramento metropolitan area, via Interstate 5. It is worth noting that this project complements ongoing state, county and private sector transportation investments.

This project will construct a new interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County, CA and will leverage more than 70% in non-federal funding supporting this public-private partnership (\$16 million from CALTRANS, \$26.82 million from Measure R funds, and \$8 million in private funding).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I am confident this project will achieve the goals of the BUILD grant program by supporting national and regional economic vitality, especially in the rural areas and in support of the agricultural industries, and through the projects leveraging of more than 70% in non-federal funding. Please feel free to contact the TCAG Executive Director, Theodore Smalley at (559) 623-0463, or Farm Bureau at (559) 732-8301 with any questions regarding this project.

Sincerely,

TRICIA STEVER BLATTLER
Executive Director

Project Synopsis: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a new interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1A from amongst four alternatives to construct a new interchange at Commercial Avenue with auxiliary lanes and leave the Paige Avenue interchange on-ramp and off-ramp opened. The Alternative 1A project would be constructed at or near Commercial Avenue, which currently does not connect to State Route 99. The project would impact 42 acres and the estimated project cost is \$66,482,000 in constant dollars. The \$16 million in INFRA funding will be leveraged with \$16 million in from CALTRANS, \$26.82 million from Measure R, and \$8 million in private funding supporting a public-private partnership. If this INFRA grant request is approved in full, INFRA funding will account for approximately 23% of the total project cost.