

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705
April 14, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I strongly support the City of Fife's proposal to the U.S. Department of Transportation FASTLANE Grant Program to fund Phase II of the Port of Tacoma Interchange Improvement Project. Fife's proposal addresses a chronic "last mile" bottleneck slowing the movement of freight through ports in the third largest gateway for containerized cargo in North America, supporting \$4.3 billion in annual economic output.

Closely spaced intersections, heavy truck volume, and functionally deficient on and off ramps contribute to chronic daily congestion along the interchange between Port of Tacoma Road, Pacific Highway East, and Interstate-5. Today, nearly 30 percent of daily traffic in this thoroughfare is truck freight bound for warehouse and distribution centers in the Green River Valley – the second largest warehousing and manufacturing center on the West Coast and the fifth largest in the nation. Congestion through Fife is only projected to escalate as statewide freight volume increases by 50 percent over the next three decades.

The Port of Tacoma Interchange Improvement Project reconfigures the existing interchange, reducing the number of intersections and creating a second overpass over Interstate-5 to facilitate direct access to Port of Tacoma facilities. The improved interchange reduces queue lengths outside the Port of Tacoma from thousands of feet to hundreds and eliminates dangerous conflict points between freight trucks and passenger vehicles. Over 59 collisions – including six fatal accidents – have been associated with the existing interchange since 2002.

Without improvement, Interstate, highway, and arterials in this area will be gridlocked by 2040. Alternatively, the Port of Tacoma Interchange could save drivers over 840,000 hours in vehicle delays and reduce truck freight delays by 63,000 hours in the same year. Open roadways could decrease consumption of fuel by 384,000 gallons, preventing 3,490 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the environment.

Phase I of the interchange is fully funded through construction and the right-of-way acquisition process is currently underway. Federal funding through the FASTLANE Grant Program would provide the last dollars needed to progress this vital freight mobility project in the Puget Sound. I gladly support the Port of Tacoma Interchange Improvement Project and ask for your full and fair consideration of the City of Fife's application.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

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