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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1313

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WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

The Honorable Elaine Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building – 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am proud to support the joint venture of Macon County and the City of Decatur, Illinois' Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant request. This application provides funding for the replacement of the Reas Bridges outside of Decatur as part of the East Beltway project.

Decatur remains a manufacturing and logistics leader in the Midwest. The community is home to production facilities for two Fortune 500 companies, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and Caterpillar, in addition to another major agricultural products producer, Tate and Lyle. It also hosts three Class I railroads through the community including the Norfolk Southern, the CSX and the Canadian National. The proposed Beltway will provide better access to the industrial base of the region, which includes Richland Community College and the ADM intermodal ramp, a key component of the Midwest Inland Port. The result will be more reliable supply chains for manufacturers and enhanced freight mobility through the region, particularly for farm-to-market suppliers from the rural areas to the east. With the projected growth in freight movement in the U.S. over the next 20 years, supporting mid-market intermodal capabilities will help meet the demand. Decatur can and will play a critical role in relieving pressure in the Chicago-area and provide more reliable freight distribution with easy access to large metropolitan areas including Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Louisville and Columbus.

The Reas Bridges are structurally deficient and as a result, have recently been weight restricted, which has forced grain trucks to re-route through the downtown Decatur area. Because of the significant presence of railroads, that results in delays at grade crossings and increased interactions with vehicular traffic posing a greater safety risk. This project will address a critical state of repair issue, provide better access for rural populations to the services they need, help expand fiber in the region, and provide a more efficient supply chain for area farmers and businesses.

For these reasons, I am proud to support this project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress