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SUE SCHERER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
96th DISTRICT

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
West Building—1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

March 7, 2019

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to express my support for the Joint Venture of Macon County and the City of Decatur, Illinois' Infrastructure for Rebuilding America, or INFRA, grant application. The application provides for replacing the Reas Bridge outside of Decatur as part of the East Beltway project.

Decatur is home to production facilities for two Fortune 500 companies, Archer Daniels Midland and Caterpillar, in addition to another major agricultural products producer, Tate and Lyle. Decatur also hosts three Class I railroads through the community, including the Norfolk Southern, the CSX, and the Canadian National.

The Beltway will provide better access to the industrial base of the region, 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. Given the projected growth in freight movements in the U.S. over the next 20 years, supporting mid-market intermodal capabilities to meet the demand is of great importance. 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, to name just a few.

Reas Bridge is structurally deficient and, as a result, has recently been weight restricted, forcing grain trucks and other heavy vehicles that travel from rural areas to the east to re-route through the downtown Decatur area. Because of the significant presence of railroads, delays at grade crossings and increased interactions with vehicular traffic are posing an even greater safety risk. This project will address a critical state of good repair issue, provide better access for rural populations to the services they need, help expand fiber in Decatur and more rural areas, and provide a more efficient supply chain for area farmers and businesses.

Given the many public benefits associated with this project, I strongly urge you to support this grant.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Scherer".

Sue Scherer
Illinois State Representative, 96th District