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February 29, 2012

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The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I appreciated the opportunity to speak with you last December and I look forward to meeting with you next week regarding the North Spokane freeway project located in Eastern Washington State. As you know firsthand, the North Spokane freeway is a billion dollar, multimodal, transportation project that will not only bring jobs to the community and state, but will increase economic revenue in the Greater Spokane region.

Already creating more than 6,000 jobs, the project has also expanded freight opportunities from Canada moving south, improved the community's air quality and reduced congestion. Yet, there is more to do. The BNSF rail realignment phase supported by the State and the community would continue the project's efforts to remove choke points along Spokane's main arteries, improve travel time, create alternative modes of transportation, expand freight mobility, and bring economic opportunities to Eastern Washington's distressed areas.

The North Spokane freeway has been and continues to be a symbol of federal/state partnerships. I had the opportunity last week to meet with State government and elected officials. I am proud to announce that both the Washington State House and Senate have approved \$5 million in the respective state supplemental transportation budget. This funding is on top of the \$71 million that is currently allocated from previous transportation partnership agreements. It is also strongly supported by Washington State's Department of Transportation. In fact, there is unanimity at the local, state, and federal level that North Spokane freeway is one of few projects around the nation that has been and continues to be truly "shovel-ready," and is an example of the type of infrastructure development federal/state partnerships should be supporting.

I invite you or your designee to visit Spokane to see the progress unfolding with the North Spokane freeway. I look forward to talking to you more about this potential visit next week.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers

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