



Distribution & Transportation Services
300 Phillip Rd
Columbus, OH 43228

Governor Ted Strickland
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6108

March 12, 2009

Dear Governor Strickland,

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Big Lots (NYSE: BIG) is a Fortune 500 company with over 1,300 stores in 47 states. For more than three decades, the company has focused on providing a vibrant mix of exciting brands, unique products and closeout prices, enabling substantial savings over traditional discount retailers. Big Lots carries attractive, affordable furniture, home furnishings, seasonal merchandise and thousands of everyday items consumers need. We have excellent relationships with our manufacturers, make high-volume purchases and exercise strict expense control to pass tremendous savings on to our customers.

Combining the flexibility of trucks and the cost-effectiveness of rail, intermodal rail transport plays an important role in our supply chain. Our combination of high-volume purchases and need for cost control, make rail a logical choice to bring our products to market and meet the needs of our customers.

The National Gateway will create a state-of-the-art rail corridor between the Mid-Atlantic's international ports and the Midwest's manufacturing centers through use of double-stack trains, adding valuable capacity and competition to a strategic transportation corridor. By providing the necessary capacity, facilities and equipment for highly-efficient rail service, the National Gateway protects our ability to serve our customers in this state and across the nation.

One train can carry the load of more than 280 trucks, clearing space for over 1,100 cars. The National Gateway will reduce transportation emissions by an estimated two million tons and reduce fuel consumption by nearly 200 million gallons. In addition, decreasing the volume of heavy trucks on crowded highways should lower highway maintenance costs and improve road safety.

We believe the National Gateway will enhance our ability to meet the needs of our customers and urge you to support public funding for this infrastructure development initiative.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold A. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Harold A. Wilson
Sr. Vice President
Distribution & Transportation Services