

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write today in support of the National Gateway application for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant funding being submitted on behalf of Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Washington, D.C. During the current economic downturn, it is critically important for federal, state and private sector leaders to work together to stimulate our economy and create jobs while making sound investments in our nation's infrastructure. It is our belief that the National Gateway project represents an investment opportunity of regional and national significance that would also provide considerable public benefit.

The National Gateway is a public-private partnership that would invest over \$800 million in rail infrastructure and intermodal terminal projects in order to link Mid-Atlantic ports (including Norfolk, Virginia) with Midwestern markets. When complete, the initiative could create a highly efficient freight transportation link between the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest by improving the flow of goods between these two regions and across the nation. The National Gateway could also improve the flow of intermodal container traffic from West Coast ports to Eastern seaboard consumption markets by taking advantage of a major new terminal that CSX and its affiliates are constructing in Northwest Ohio. This new terminal would enable rail traffic to flow more efficiently through Chicago, reducing transit time by 24 to 48 hours, and complement other terminals being constructed or expanded as part of this initiative in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.

The National Gateway project is supported by a large coalition of public and private sector leaders including the governors of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina, over two dozen members of Congress, three port authorities, two metropolitan planning organizations and a large group of global shippers, ocean carriers, business organizations and environmental groups. It is our understanding that this project has nearly \$550 million in state and private sector funds committed to date. Requested TIGER funds would provide the remaining 31 percent of total financing – funding that would serve the critical purpose of creating jobs and stimulating the economy throughout the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions. In Virginia alone, the National Gateway will help deliver more than \$550 million in benefits by tripling the Port of Hampton's rail-served market access potential and shifting nearly two million trucks from the highway to the railway.

The National Gateway is a prime example of how the public and private sectors can work together to leverage scarce economic resources and address our nation's most pressing economic and freight transportation challenges. We respectfully ask that you afford this project every consideration in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Webb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Webb".

Jim Webb
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark R. Warner". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Warner" being the most legible parts, and "R." in the middle.

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator