

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary, US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

Congratulations on your confirmation as U.S. Secretary of Transportation. We look forward to working with you and the rest of the Administration to advance transportation and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of our nation's freight corridors. Specifically, we would like to bring to your attention the important role that the Interstate 94 West Corridor plays in the state of Minnesota, the region, and our nation. We urge you to advance critical improvements on this project and others like it throughout the country.

As you may know, the Interstate 94 West Corridor (I-94) runs through the entire state of Minnesota and bisects through six of the state's eight Congressional Districts. It also provides a vital connection to our constituents utilizing I-35 and I-90, making it an important local, state, regional, and national freight corridor. We believe that this corridor is poised to leverage local and state funding with new federal freight corridor resources to further promote the movement of people and resources.

There is strong support behind efforts to expand capacity on I-94. Recently, the National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure (NACTTI) selected this project for its list of 21 "shovel ready" projects which was narrowed from the hundreds of applications received. In addition, this corridor has received approximately \$36 million in investments from the State of Minnesota and local governments to complete the first phase of the project and was recently awarded \$1.4 million to continue with phase two.

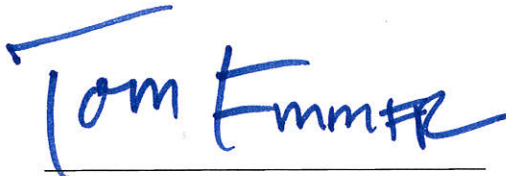
Local governments, businesses, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders have formed the Minnesota I-94 West Corridor Coalition to work together to expand the capacity of I-94—one of Minnesota's most critical transportation and commerce arteries. While Minnesota's metropolitan communities and businesses have continued to expand, transportation infrastructure has remained relatively stagnant, creating a strain on those who rely on the corridor for the transportation of goods, commuting, and tourism. The congestion that residents face as they travel along the I-94 corridor is significant, and studies have shown that I-94 has a crash severity rate that is significantly higher than the statewide average. Minnesotans and goods spend many hours trapped on this roadway that is a lifeline of commerce for the upper Midwest and much of greater Minnesota.

The economic return along this corridor is a major boost to the region's economy. Since completion of the Phase 1 capacity expansion in 2015, the corridor has seen an astonishing 55 percent reduction in total vehicle delay, as well as nearly three million square feet of industrial

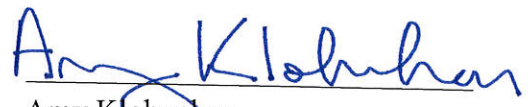
development. The I-94 West Corridor has been the number one Interregional Corridor in the State of Minnesota for return on investment criteria calculation.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your work to improve our nation's freight corridors. We look forward to working with you to improve the capacity of the Interstate 94 West Corridor as the development of a comprehensive freight plan continues.

Sincerely,



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Jason Lewis
Member of Congress



Rick Nolan
Member of Congress



Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress