



Brian Schweitzer, Governor

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October 21, 2011

Mr. Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Port of Northern Montana Multimodal Hub Center's TIGER III Application

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This letter conveys the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) support for the Port of Northern Montana Multimodal Hub Center project.

\$9,998,910 in federal funds would be combined with \$7,346,558 in non-federal funds and used to construct Montana's first multimodal facility, served by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway. Completion of the project will allow Montana to import and export containerized cargo and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by taking an estimated 25,000 commercial trucks off the road each year.

Railroads are the most environmentally friendly mode of surface transportation and BNSF is among the rail industry's leaders. Each BNSF train can move one ton of freight 423 miles on a single gallon of diesel fuel. Shifting Montana exports from truck to rail transportation is estimated to reduce carbon emissions by 54 percent per load, which equates to a 1.1 million metric ton reduction by year 2035.

As funding applications are evaluated, I would hope that you would carefully consider the merits of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard H. Opper", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Richard H. Opper
Director