



NaturEner

October 18, 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

Dear Mr. Secretary,

This letter conveys NaturEner's support for the Port of Northern Montana Multimodal Hub Center project, for which the Northern Express Transportation Authority has requested \$9,998,910 in TIGER III grant funding. Federal funds will be combined with a \$7,346,558 non-federal match and used to construct Montana's first multimodal freight rail facility to facilitate the domestic movement of oversize equipment and energy supplies.

Montana has more potential for energy development from current and prospective new diversified sources than any state in the nation. This project seeks to remove a transportation-related impediment to that development and create an opportunity to accelerate the construction of Montana's renewable energy projects.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway does not have any intermodal facilities in Montana that can accommodate the delivery of unit trains of wind tower components. Instead, developers must use commercial trucks, which is not ideal due to multi-state jurisdictional length and load limits and special permit fees. This project could resolve that issue by constructing 10,860 linear feet of rail track, 3,600 feet of new access roads and a 20 acre laydown yard capable of receiving unit train deliveries of wind tower components.

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

Sincerely,

Bill Alexander
NaturEner
Vice President/Chief Development Officer
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