



October 27, 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 TIGER III Application

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to express the Port of Tacoma'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 committed to the project.

This project is the first phase of an ultimate corridor clearance initiative to improve the Great Northern Rail Corridor. Because of physical limitations created by tunnels and snow sheds along the Great Northern Rail Corridor, the mountainous route is restricted to handling wind energy components no larger than 13 feet, two inches in diameter. This project will increase tunnel sizes and modify snow sheds to accommodate loads in excess of 14 feet, which is becoming the industry standard for shipping wind energy components by rail.

The Multimodal Hub Center project in will enable the handling of high and wide wind energy components imported from the Pacific Rim and destined for projects located in the northern tier and mid-western states. The hub will include 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 a result, this facility will be able to accommodate full length wind tower unit and intermodal trains. The project also will facilitate the export of domestically manufactured wind energy components and containerized agricultural products through Pacific Northwest ports such as the Port of Tacoma.

The project is 100 percent shovel-ready. It has received all required environmental clearances including Categorical Exclusions from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Railroad Administration.

As applications are evaluated, I hope that you will carefully consider the project's merits and provide the funds necessary to build the Northern Montana Multitmodal Hub Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Wolfe".

John Wolfe
Chief Executive Officer