

SWEETGRASS DEVELOPMENT

SERVING NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA – CASCADE, GLACIER, PONDERA, TETON AND TOOLE COUNTIES

October 25, 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,

Sweetgrass Development is comprised of a five county region in North Central Montana including Glacier, Cascade, Pondera, Teton and Toole Counties. Sweetgrass Development is an Economic Development District with designation through the U.S. Economic Development Administration as well as a Certified Regional Development District through the State of Montana. The mission and objectives of the organization are to assist the governments and citizens in each county and the Blackfeet Nation, achieve their economic goals, while preserving their distinct cultures and way of life.

This letter conveys the Sweet Grass Development's support for the Port of Northern Montana Multimodal Hub Center, 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 that has been committed to the project and dedicated through completion.

The project has received all required environmental clearances and is in line with our mission to enhance economic prosperity within the area. Currently, the State of Montana does not have a rail facility with the ability to ship and receive containerized cargos for import and export. This project will construct Montana's first multimodal facility to facilitate the domestic movement of oversize equipment and the export of value added food commodities and manufactured products—a significant commercial accomplishment for the community, region and State of Montana. This facility will also bring a multitude of family wage jobs to Montana's Hi Line and north central Montana.

Sweetgrass Development is committed to improving the quality of life in the counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole. This project supports the mission statement of Sweetgrass Development and will benefit not only the region, but the state as a whole.

As funding applications are evaluated, please carefully consider the merits of this project. Thank you for your time and consideration in advance.

Sincerely,



Tony Sitzmann
President
Sweetgrass Development

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