



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman

Katherine W. Dedrick
Staff Director

Sam Graves
Ranking Member

Paul J. Sass
Republican Staff Director

May 12, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my support for the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay's (Port) application for a grant from the Port Infrastructure and Development Program (PIDP) to fund Phase II of the Coos Bay Rail Line's (CBRL) Tie and Surfacing program. The CBRL provides a vital transportation connection for critical industries in rural Coos, Douglas, and Lane Counties.

The Port owns and operates CBRL Inc., a 134-mile short line railroad which has served the State and Nation for over 100 years as the only freight rail connection from southwestern Oregon to the national railway network via the Union Pacific yard in Eugene, Oregon. The line serves as a cost-effective transportation option for eight primary shippers who employ approximate 800 people with family wage jobs and ship an estimated \$250 million in goods to and from a tri-county rural region. As an economically disadvantaged region, maintaining safe, reliable and consistent freight rail service is paramount to retaining existing jobs as well as attracting new business.

The proposed project will serve to replace a significant number of railroad crossties and resurface 119 miles of track along the CBRL, improving the overall integrity and long-term viability of its rail infrastructure. Many of the existing ties on the track were installed as many as 40-50 years ago, greatly exceeding their recommended useful life. Tie and surfacing work is critical to ensure capacity on the line, remove existing slow orders, increase safety and reliability, decrease train travel time, and reduce roadway congestion. The benefits listed above will improve the multi-modal transportation network in the region while preserving a west coast freight option that provides connectivity to a deep-water harbor at the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay.

This project will build on repairs and rehabilitation efforts completed nearly a decade ago through a TIGER II grant to return the line to service following a three-year closure. The Port's PIDP proposal aims to continue efforts to improve track infrastructure which will ensure the safety and longevity of the line in meeting current and future regional transportation demands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter A. DeFazio". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "P" and "D".

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman