



July 17, 2018

Secretary Elaine L. Chao - Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We strongly support Pima County's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application to realign the Union Pacific Railroad (UP), Nogales Subdivision Line (Nogales Line) out of the City of Tucson's urban center and into rural, industrial areas planned for rail-served economic development.

The potential realignment would reduce or eliminate the number of trains currently utilizing 20 at-grade crossings where approximately 300,000 cars cross daily, contributing to significant traffic congestion, auto related idle pollution, and safety concerns. The Nogales Line, with trains an average of 7,000 foot in length, runs on a line that cuts through six existing City of Tucson neighborhoods, three city wards and seven zip codes, serving not only as a visual barrier, but also a physical barrier to residents and local businesses. The 20 at-grade crossings create barriers to the efficient flow of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic. In addition, the Nogales Line runs adjacent to Borton Magnet Elementary, Van Buskirk Elementary, and Drexel Elementary schools.

The Nogales Line (Line) would be relocated to a U.S. Census Bureau designated Rural Area, south of the Tucson metropolitan area, along Old Vail Connection Road, within both unincorporated Pima County, and partially within the incorporated limits of the City of Tucson. Nearly the entire 11-mile bypass route is undeveloped and surrounded by industrially zoned land that is planned for regional economic development. The realignment will ensure that all future crossings will be configured to minimize future car and train interaction with separated crossings giving priority to train traffic. The potential realignment will open up thousands of acres of vacant land for rail served development opportunities, expanding the region's international freight logistics opportunities.

The Rail Expansion and Bypass Project is part of a broader transportation program that will build a bypass route from Interstate 10 to Interstate 19 and support adjacent economic development. This project is part of the Aerospace Research Campus, which comprises nearly 500 acres of vacant land in close proximity to TIA, Interstates 10 (I-10) and 19 (I-19), and the Union Pacific Railroad Nogales Line that serves several large ports in western Mexico. Pima County has invested millions of dollars to provide the necessary infrastructure to support of existing employers, and bring new employers to the area. The 2011 Arizona State Rail Plan identified the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region as a Long-Range Economic Vision for the state, with nearly 75 percent of growth in the target growth sectors projected to occur in



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the Sun Corridor region. The relocation of the Nogales Subdivision Line is closely tied to the State's goal of supporting economic growth and enhancing the "State's global competitive position through strategic rail initiatives", with inbound and outbound rail freight projected to double by 2030 and triple by 2050. With the potential to add several thousand acres of available land, there is a projected annual economic impact of \$3.2 billion once this area is fully developed.

Pima County's BUILD application requests \$4 million in grant funds for the planning and design on the 11-mile rail bypass route. The County will provide a \$1 million cash match towards this effort. The goal of this project is to bring the rail design to completion at the same time as the Sonoran Corridor to allow them to be bid and built simultaneously, thus taking advantage of economies of scale and minimizing disruption to adjacent businesses. Again, we strongly support the County's application, and are confident that it will provide substantial benefits to the region, state and nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ramón Valadez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Ramón Valadez
Pima County Supervisor
District 2