

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2018

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

Ronald Batory, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao and Administrator Batory:

We strongly support Pima County's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant application to relocate the Union Pacific Railroad Nogales Line through the Aerospace Research Campus (ARC) south of Tucson International Airport. The application is also supported by the City of Tucson, Union Pacific Railroad and the Arizona Department of Transportation.

As background, the ARC 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 develop this area in support of existing employers, and incentivize new employers to relocate to the area.

In addition, Pima County has been working with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) on a rapid surface interstate connection between I-19 and I-10 south of the metropolitan Tucson area. This connection would be beneficial to both facilitate cross border commerce with Mexico and linking employment and residential centers to a high-speed surface transportation facility.

The Auxiliary Interstate Highway connection from I-19 to I-10, also called the Sonoran Corridor, is perhaps the most important economic development surface transportation improvement in the region. The Pima Association of Governments (PAG) and local partners have embraced this connection as the most important transportation project that will facilitate job growth in the existing and growing manufacturing, technology, logistics and defense corridor in metropolitan Pima County. To that end, the PAG Regional Council has provided the funding for a three-year ADOT/Federal Highway Administration Environmental Impact Study that is currently underway. In June 2015, the entire Arizona Delegation cosponsored successful legislation to designate the Sonoran Corridor as part of the interstate highway system. This legislation was also supported by Arizona Governor Doug Ducey and local business leaders.

The next step in the development of this economically vital project is expanding rail service, which would provide a globally competitive research and logistics corridor. To optimize that expansion,

the relocation of the Nogales Line through the ARC will be necessary. Such a relocation will provide tremendous benefits to the local community, state and nation, and are fully aligned with CRISI grant objectives, including:

- Reducing traffic congestion by removing 18 at-grade crossings, where approximately 306,000 cars cross daily;
- Improving safety, mobility and air quality in an urban area by removing the 18 at-grade crossings;
- Enhancing safety by ensuring that all future crossings would be configured to minimize car and train interaction with above grade crossings giving priority to train traffic;
- Further enhancing safety with the removal of heavy freight rail traffic and potentially hazardous cargo passing through existing neighborhoods and adjacent to two elementary schools;
- Repurposing the existing segment of line between Downtown and Old Vail Connection Rd for future alternative uses such as intercity passenger or commuter rail;
- Accelerating logistics growth through certified direct delivery and origination of international containers due to the line's close proximity to the Port of Tucson, the region's only intermodal facility in Arizona; and
- Opening up thousands of acres of vacant land for industrial and logistics uses that could be served by this new alignment;

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 the Sun Corridor region. The relocation of the Nogales 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, according to an economic impact analysis by Sun Corridor, Inc.

Pima County's CRISI grant application, if successful, would provide critical funding to assist with the project development and infrastructure planning necessary to formally begin the rail line relocation. Again, we strongly support the County's application, believe it is fully aligned with goals of the CRISI program, and are confident that it will provide substantial benefits to the region, state and nation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

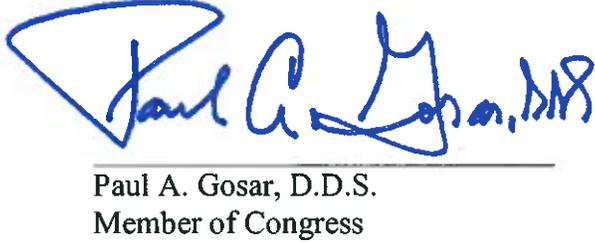
Respectfully,



Martha McSally
Member of Congress


Andy Biggs
Member of Congress


Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress


Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress


Debbie Lesko
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