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May 28, 2020

Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Letter in Support of County of Kaua'i Po'ipū Road Safety and Mobility Project BUILD Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to you in support of the County of Kauai's grant application to the Department of Transportation for \$20,364,300 from the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Program.

The BUILD Program is a critical tool for local governments to improve safety, enhance the quality of life, and expand economic development. This grant will allow the State of Hawaii's County of Kaua'i to revitalize Po'ipū Road, which serves as a critical connection between the town of Kōloa and the Po'ipū Resort area, a region key to the island's economy.

This project will result in a safer road for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars, create multimodal options to reduce congestion and advance the freight network. Road investments will ease traffic and reduce congestion while creating continuous sidewalks and bike lanes. Such improvements will enhance access from the South Shore to the town core, making it safer and easier for children to get to school, commuters to get to work and tourists to explore the island.

The economic development potential associated with the Po'ipū Road project is also critical now more than ever to support the County on the road to recover from impacts of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Hawaii's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the nation, with over 1 in 3 workers having lost their jobs due to the virus-related shutdown. According to a statewide survey by the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, Kaua'i in turn is one of the worst-hit areas in the State of Hawaii with an unemployment rate up to 62%.

Not only does this project border an Opportunity Zone, a region designated by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to spur as an economically distressed area, but it will also exist to support roughly 20% of jobs on the island of Kaua'i. Upgrading Po'ipū Road will encourage economic investment in the region and will play a role in supporting Kauai's recovery from the pandemic.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of Kaua'i County's grant application. Please contact my district office staff, Asami Kobayashi at Asami.Kobayashi@mail.house.gov, if you have any further questions.

With aloha,

Ed Case

Congressman Ed Case
Hawai'i-First District

EC/AK