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MEMBER OF CONGRESS
14TH DISTRICT OF OHIO

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

April 10, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I urge your full and fair consideration of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application submitted by The Port of Cleveland (Port) and The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). The Port and NOACA seek \$15.6 M in INFRA funds to address the instability at Irishtown Bend in Cleveland, Ohio – a catalytic project that will protect thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic impact for Northeast Ohio.

Franklin Hill is located at Irishtown Bend on the Cuyahoga River's federal shipping channel, part of the federal M-90 Marine Highway Corridor. Unfortunately, geological problems with the hillside have been documented for over 40 years. Recent engineering studies commissioned by the Port confirmed that the hillside continues to slide toward the river. An ongoing, serious threat of catastrophic collapse into the Cuyahoga River exists, posing a risk to the federal channel. In the past decade, a road that runs along the hillside was closed because its grade dropped over 6 feet in the span of a few years. If a collapse occurred – as studies suggest is readily possible – it would completely shut down shipping along the river, bringing a large sector of Northeast Ohio's regional economy to a halt.

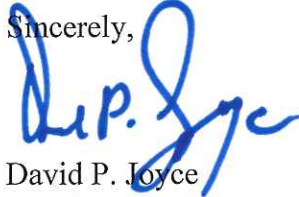
Recent economic impact studies by the Port show that \$3.5 billion and 20,000 jobs are tied to the maritime commerce that depends on the Cuyahoga River shipping channel. For example, the ArcelorMittal-Cleveland steel mill – one of the most productive steel making facilities in the world – provides over 2,000 jobs and sits upriver from the Irishtown Bend site. It cannot operate without an open river channel as there are no practical transportation alternatives. Keeping steel production thriving in the U.S. is a key priority for our nation's economy and security. These are the types of stakes involved with the Irishtown Bend project.

The Port and NOACA's application for INFRA dollars for Irishtown Bend is an innovative approach to solve this long-term threat to the local economy from the type of "crumbling

infrastructure” that INFRA was intended to address. This project would stabilize the hillside with 2,600 linear feet of new bulkheads and tiebacks along the Cuyahoga River’s federal navigation channel, stabilizing the hill, protecting the channel, and ensuring billions in economic impact and tens of thousands of jobs. According to the Port of Cleveland, stakeholders in the neighborhood adjacent to Irishtown Bend are also poised to contribute hundreds of millions of dollars in investments in transit, commercial, recreational, and residential projects; thus, stabilizing the hillside would further catalyze these developments, adding more jobs and investment.

This project has support at the state and local level as demonstrated by the fact that the required matching funds in excess of \$16.2 million have been secured. The Irishtown Bend project hits all the key markers to make it highly worthy of INFRA grant support. Thank you for your careful consideration of this application. Should you have questions, please contact Charles Castagna in my office at 202-225-5731 or Charles.Castagna@mail.house.gov. I look forward to continuing to work with you and to hearing from you about the Department’s final decision.

Sincerely,



David P. Joyce
Member of Congress