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February 3, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Madam Secretary:

Congratulations on your confirmation as the 18th Secretary of Transportation. I wish you much success for your leadership creating jobs, promoting commerce, and improving quality of life for all Americans. I look forward to working together with you on these priorities.

As you know, investing in our nation's infrastructure is crucial to ensuring American families can safely and affordably travel between work, home, and school. That is why I strongly urge the timely execution of the Full Funding Grant Agreement for the shovel-ready electrification of Caltrain, so that one of your first actions as Secretary will create jobs, improve an aging transportation system and spur our economy.

Caltrain, the commuter rail line connecting San Francisco and Silicon Valley, is a key component to managing traffic congestion along this corridor, one of our nation's top economic engines. With nearly 65,000 daily passengers, Caltrain ridership has more than doubled over the last decade, with rush-hour trips now well over 100 percent of seated capacity. Caltrain must modernize in order to keep up with increasing demand.

Caltrain's electrification will transition a fleet of aging diesel engines to high-performance electric trains that can operate cleaner, faster, and more frequently – increasing capacity, improving efficiency and creating jobs.

In fact, as my California colleagues reflected in their support letter, “The Caltrain Modernization Program will result in the creation of over 9,600 jobs, including over 1,300 located outside of California in places like Jacksonville, Florida; Richmond, Virginia; Hudson, Wisconsin; Littleton, Colorado and more. For example, in Salt Lake City alone, this project is the driving force behind plans to build an assembly plant that will create new employment opportunities to over 550 workers and will help establish a new domestic railcar assembly facility in the United States.”

The \$647 million federal investment is but one crucial component for this \$1.98 billion endeavor, as these federal dollars will be leveraged with the funding support from the local communities, the region and our state, whose support has already been fully committed.

The proposed grant agreement, which underwent a rigorous evaluation by the Federal Transit Administration, completes the 30-day Congressional review period on February 18, 2017. I strongly urge you to approve this grant agreement immediately following the review period, as delay beyond March 1st endangers this critically needed project.

Thank you for consideration of my views and I look forward to working with you to achieve a 21st century transportation infrastructure network for our nation.

best regards,



NANCY PELOSI

Democratic Leader