

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Federal Rail Administration Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program
Federal Rail Administration Corridor Identification and Development Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We urge your approval of Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) application for funding Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation (UHSGT) through the FRA Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program, and concurrent application for funding through the Corridor Identification and Development Program.

Growth projections for the Cascadia region, which includes Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, are startling, with the populations expected to increase by more than 30% -- or 3 to 4 million additional people -- by 2050. This project would help our region strategically respond to that growth and connect communities and population centers to catalyze economic growth, spur job creation, improve access to affordable housing, and address climate change and reduce carbon emissions.

A broad group of private sector stakeholders has been collaborating with WSDOT, along with the state of Oregon and province of British Columbia, to explore the potential for an ultra-high-speed ground transportation system in the Cascadia region. Stakeholder support for an ultra-high-speed ground transportation project includes a broad coalition of industry, business, labor, environmental and community organizations, and local elected officials who recognize continued competitiveness of Cascadia region takes bold, forward thinking.

This application fulfills the evaluation criteria in these ways:

- **Safety:** Reducing traffic congestion along the corridor by providing a safe, reliable form of transportation.
- **Equitable economic growth and job creation:** Creating stronger connections between Oregon, Washington and British Columbia supporting equitable growth and job creation, as well as catalyzing economic opportunities across the Cascadia region.
- **Equity and barriers to opportunity:** Reducing barriers to opportunities and supporting an equitable transportation system that includes a network of transportation options, connecting people to jobs, educational institutions, affordable housing, and regional destinations.
- **Climate change and sustainability:** Decreasing emissions on I-5 by reducing congestion, helping to mitigate climate change and support sustainability and resilience in the region.

- **Transformation of our nation’s transportation infrastructure:** Expanding transportation options that address climate change and create equitable outcomes, and link communities and job centers to accommodate our growing populations.

There will also be a high priority on equitable engagement and early collaboration with Tribes and First Nations, as well as historically overburdened and disadvantaged communities throughout the corridor.

This project represents an innovative solution for a better future for people traveling into and out of the region. We urge your approval of WSDOT’s application for funding Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation through the FRA Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program, and concurrent application for funding through the Corridor Identification and Development Program.

Sincerely,





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