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September 15, 2009

The Honorable Secretary Ray LaHood
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are writing in support of the Valley Regional Transit East/West Commute Corridors Alternative Transportation Package application for TIGER Discretionary Grants. It is important that the U.S. Department of Transportation distributes TIGER discretionary funds in a way that recognizes that there is an important national interest in transportation investment in and across rural states such as Idaho, not just in more heavily populated areas.

This comprehensive project will provide the infrastructure and capital improvements needed to meet current transit demands in our region and position our transit service to handle future growth. The service additions will test demand along current gaps in our east/west commute corridors and the high capacity corridor study will lay the ground work for a system to meet future needs. Without these TIGER funds, it would take at least 10 years for the region to complete these projects.

The Treasure Valley is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. The growth pattern has a majority of the housing expansion in the neighborhoods and cities west of Boise, the major employment center in the State. This current growth rate, coupled with limited roadways corridors, has created extended delays in the daily east/west commute. The topography and rapid growth have lead to the Treasure Valley Airshed bordering on non-attainment for ozone. Ada County is a maintenance area for course particulate matter and carbon monoxide. This package of projects is an important step in addressing these air pollution issues.

The Valley Regional Transit East/West Commute Corridors Alternative Transportation Package meets the legislative objectives of creating immediate job growth and economic stimulation by creating an estimated 246 immediate jobs and seven additional long-term jobs and positioning the Treasure Valley region to grow well into the future.

Supporting this application for transit improvement projects is vital to ensuring our infrastructure meets the growing needs of Idaho communities, improves the nation's transportation system, creates and preserves jobs, and furthers economic recovery and growth.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued leadership on these issues.

Sincerely,



MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



JAMES E. RISCH
United States Senator



MIKE SIMPSON
Member of Congress



WALT MINNICK
Member of Congress