



Washington State Tree Fruit Association

105 S. 18th Street, Suite 116 - Yakima, WA 98901 - 509-452-8555

July 7, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express the support of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association (WSTFA) for the City of Fife's 2020 Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application for Phase II of the I-5/Port of Tacoma Road Interchange Improvement Project (Project). This Project completes the final phase of a transformational effort by the City of Fife, the Port of Tacoma, and The Washington State Department of Transportation to address significant backups at this interchange and to dramatically improve the movement of freight and goods as well as traffic in general.

WSTFA represents the growers, packers, and marketers of apples, pears, cherries and other tree fruits in Washington State. Thirty percent of our members' production is exported, much of it through the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Central and Eastern Washington depend on the ability to get crops to foreign markets- Washington alone exports \$6.5 billion in goods through our ports each year supporting nearly 400,000 jobs. Agricultural goods are a large percentage of those exports including \$497 million in apples, \$461 million in hay, and \$243 million in cherries.

Washington State's economy is critically dependent on the efficient movement of freight on its roadways. The Project includes road, intersection, and intersection improvements at the I-5 /Port of Tacoma Road interchange that will greatly enhance a critical connection to the Port of Tacoma, which combines with the Port of Seattle to form the fourth largest gateway for containerized cargo in our nation.

Thank you for considering our members' support for the City of Fife's BUILD grant application.

Sincerely,

Ranie L. Haas
Director of Regulatory and Industry Affairs
Washington State Tree Fruit Association