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April 22, 2016

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

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I write in support of the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for TIGER 2016 funding for the Historic Columbia River Highway: Viento State Park to Perham Creek project. If funded, this important project will construct 1.7 miles of the remaining five miles of abandoned Columbia River Highway awaiting reconnection as the State Trail.

A century ago, the Columbia River Highway was constructed through the Columbia River Gorge, one of America's great natural wonders. As America's first scenic highway, it served thousands of travelers and took full advantage of the Columbia River Gorge's natural beauty and became known as the "King of Roads." Much of this original highway has been lost, and the remaining sections have been disconnected for decades. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 directed the State of Oregon to connect these abandoned highway sections as a pedestrian and bike trail. Today, a great deal of work is underway to complete this vision: five miles of the Historic Highway State Trail are under construction in 2016 – the highway's centennial year. Already, communities along the reconstructed trail see millions of dollars in economic impact generated by bicycle tourism every year, which will be multiplied by completion of the trail.

Combined with existing trail segments and those under construction, this proposed TIGER project will contribute to the completion of a 7.7 mile continuous trail corridor between the Gorton Creek Trailhead at Wyeth and Perham Creek. Momentum and excitement is building in the Gorge around the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail and the highway's centennial.

Throughout my career I have advocated for strong protections for the Columbia River Gorge, as well as improved access to recreation opportunities. When completed, the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail will create a world-class cycling route and safe transportation corridor that will enhance the livability and the economy of the communities in the Columbia River

Gorge. As the founder of the Congressional Bike Caucus and an avid cyclist, I can speak to the benefits this project will bring to Oregon—in terms of safety, tourism, and recreation.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Blumenauer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Earl" being particularly prominent.

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress