Mid-Columbia
MCEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

April 27, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: TIGER grant application for Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail

Dear Secretary Foxx,

The Mid-Economic Development District (MCEDD) supports regional efforts to ensure a thriving and prosperous Columbia Gorge economy in Oregon and Washington. As part of our regional vision, MCEDD extends our support for the Oregon Department of Transportation's effort to secure TIGER funds to allow for the design and construction of the Historic Columbia River Highway State trail between Viento State Park and Perham Creek in Hood River County.

The Mid-Columbia 2016 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy lists the Historic Columbia River Highway State trail as a key regional asset, but also recognizes the challenges in meeting the full vision of reconnecting the trail to meet growing industry and population needs. Our 2016 strategy reaffirmed the importance of the reconnection of the Historic Columbia River Highway, with participants in our transportation conversations listing it in the top ten regional transportation needs. With the completion of both bicycle trail development projects – the Wyeth to Starvation Creek Trail project and Mitchell Point tunnel to Hood River project – the project proponent states that bicyclists are anticipated to make an additional $6.3 million in expenditures per year in the local communities throughout the Gorge. Additional bicycle recreation spending will support an additional 82 full and part-time jobs with approximately $1.7 million in earnings and $270,000 in state and local tax receipts annually.

The use of TIGER funds can help complete our region's ambitious vision to (re)create one of the truly unique cycling and pedestrian routes in the country. It is the kind of project that defines Oregon as we see it today and wish for others to see it as well.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hoey
Executive Director

MCEDD is an equal opportunity employer, lender and provider.
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