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October 30, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Commercial Association of REALTORS® Wisconsin (CARW), I write in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application to the 2017/18 Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant program.

WisDOT is seeking a grant to support construction of a portion of the I-94 North-South expansion project in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties. CARW represents more than 700 commercial real estate professionals including brokers, developers, investors and owners who are connected to nearly every commercial real estate transaction that takes place in Southeast Wisconsin. This includes industrial, warehouse/distribution, storage and manufacturing facilities. These property types represent hundreds of millions of square feet of commercial real estate in our region, and that number continues to grow as development, particularly along the I-94 N/S corridor, continues.

As a key component of the National Highway Freight Network, I-94 traverses over 1,500 miles and connects major U.S. cities like Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. This corridor plays a vital role in the local economy, allowing for the transportation of goods and passengers throughout the region. The completed project will improve the efficiency and reliability of this critical network for manufacturing and shipping throughout the region.

I-94 has not been fully reconstructed since its completion in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The current expansion project will replace frontage roads, ramps, pavement, bridges, and other structures, and redesign interchanges to improve safety, traffic flow, and operational deficiencies. It will also increase the number of general purpose lanes from six to eight from the Wisconsin/Illinois state line to the City of Milwaukee.

WisDOT is seeking an INFRA grant which would allow for the completion of the I-94 North-South Project by 2021 rather than 2032. I respectfully request U.S. DOT provide careful consideration of this project and the wide range of benefits it will provide across the region and the State of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Tracy Johnson
President & CEO, CARW