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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

May 12, 2020

Secretary Elaine Chao  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I would like to draw your attention to the application for the 2020 BUILD Discretionary Grant program submitted by the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) for their Rail Car Replacement Program Project. If awarded BUILD Grant funding, GCRTA will be able to replace its existing heavy rail vehicles, which have reached the end of their useful life due to significant corrosion and obsolete parts from excessive age. Maintenance costs for the cars are now double that of a newer fleet.

GCRTA provides transportation for 150,000-200,000 customers on a typical weekday, or about 45 million rides annually, to the Greater Cleveland region. Two of the top six job centers in Ohio are located along GCRTA's route: Downtown Cleveland and University Circle. GCRTA's heavy rail cars connect Cleveland Hopkins Airport to downtown Cleveland destinations such as Tower City Center, Gateway Sports and Entertainment Complex (home of Cleveland's NBA Cavaliers and MLB Indians), JACK Cleveland Casino, and University Circle, which includes the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University, and Severance Hall. The mission of GCRTA is to connect those in Northeastern Ohio to essential destinations with safe, reliable, clean, and courteous public transportation. Receiving funding to replace their aging heavy rail vehicles will allow GCRTA to continue making a powerful positive impact for their riders and for the Greater Cleveland area.

BUILD Grant funding will improve the safety and reliability of the GCRTA heavy rail system, enabling GCRTA to continue connecting riders to work and educational opportunities, as well as medical and social service facilities. Heavy rail transports over 6.2 million riders annually, covering 38 million passenger miles. If rail service were to be interrupted or discontinued, it would be disastrous to the public transportation network throughout the Greater Cleveland region, and for accessibility for Ohioans. In 2019, the Department of Transportation/Federal Transit Administration ranked GCRTA's BUILD application for railcar replacement as highly recommended, but it was not selected for funding.

Replacing GCRTA's aging heavy rail vehicles is essential to quality of life, to equity, and to economic and cultural growth in the Greater Cleveland Area. If GCRTA is chosen to receive BUILD Grant funding in 2020, millions of riders and even more Ohioans will benefit. Please give this application full and fair consideration. If you have any questions, please contact my office. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator