



# CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

#1 GARY K. ANDERSON PLAZA

DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62523-1196

July 16, 2019

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

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to express my support for the Joint Venture of Macon County and the City of Decatur Illinois' BUILD grant application. The application requests \$7.5 million to replace the Reas Bridges just east of Decatur as part of the East Beltway project.

As Mayor of Decatur, I have recognized the importance of making critical investments in our infrastructure to support economic development. Working with the Macon County Board, four years ago we entered into an intergovernmental agreement to combine our efforts to improve the region's transportation system in order to maximize economic development opportunities and provide a better quality of life for the region's residents. Since that time, we have collaborated to set priorities and begin implementation of those priorities. This project is currently our top priority.

The City understands that it is important that we contribute what we can to support our collective efforts. To that end, we implemented a gas and diesel tax through our home-rule powers to allow us to address critical maintenance needs on our City streets. We are in the process of spending \$72 million over the next several years to address our aging water and wastewater infrastructure and investing over \$90 million dollars dredging Lake Decatur. In addition, the City is implementing a broad band network initiative to provide better connections for businesses and residents.

Decatur is home to production facilities for 2 Fortune 500 companies, Archer Daniels Midland and Caterpillar in addition to another major agricultural products producer, Tate and Lyle. Decatur also hosts 2 Class I railroads through the community including the CN and Norfolk Southern, and 2 short line railroads Decatur Central Railroad and Decatur and Eastern Railroad (Watco).

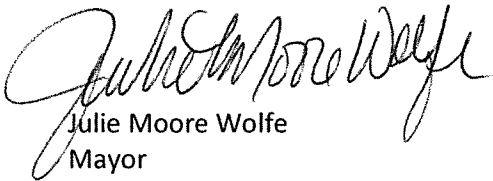
The Beltway will provide better access to the industrial base of the region, Richland Community College and the ADM intermodal ramp, a key component of the Midwest Inland Port. The result will be more reliable supply chains for agriculture-based manufacturers and enhanced freight mobility through the region, particularly for farm-to-market suppliers from the rural areas to the east. Given the projected growth in freight movements in the U.S. over the next 20 years, it is important to support mid-market intermodal capabilities to meet the demand. Decatur can and will play a critical role in relieving pressure in the Chicago-area and provide more

reliable freight distribution with easy access to large metropolitan areas including Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Louisville and Columbus among others.

Reas Bridges are structurally deficient and as a result have recently been weight restricted forcing grain trucks and other heavy vehicles traveling from the rural areas to the east to re-route through the downtown Decatur area. The presence of multiple railroads in the City often results in delays at grade crossings and increased interactions between heavy trucks and light vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists posing a greater safety risk. The construction of this project will help to alleviate those issues. Additionally, this project will address a critical state of good repair issue, provide better access for rural populations to the services they need, help expand fiber in Decatur and more rural areas, and provide a more efficient supply chain for area farmers and businesses.

Given the many public benefits associated with this project, I strongly urge you to support this grant. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Julie Moore Wolfe". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Julie Moore Wolfe  
Mayor  
City of Decatur, Illinois