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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0909
September 17, 2009

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The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

**RE: Pinellas County USDOT "TIGER Grants for Surface Transportation" Application
(RFA# DTOS59-09-RA-TIGER)**

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I write in strong support of an application for a Department of Transportation TIGER grant that would provide long-term regional traffic congestion reduction and enhance safety in Pinellas County, Florida by implementing an innovative intelligent transportation system. A successful application will advance a long-sought goal of operating the County's transportation network in a manner that best maximizes and leverages regional resources.

Specifically, this proposal would ease area congestion on many of the County's worst arterial roadways by continuing implementation of the Smart Tracs Arterial Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). This project would also provide for a higher level of transit and emergency management / response services, complementing ongoing inter-governmental collaborative efforts to improve public service.

In cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, Pinellas County will deploy multiple technological components to build Phase II of the Smart Tracs system and integrate intelligent multimodal functionality. The four major components of this project include:

- Implementation of Phase II of the Smart Tracs Arterial ITS system that includes Adaptive Control Software, Advanced Travel Information System, and Incident Management systems;
- Integration of Bus Rapid Transit Technology;
- Integration and Testing of Wireless 4.9 / 5.9 GHz Vehicle to Roadside Communications; and
- Signalized Arterial Level Travel Times.

The initial stage of the Smart Tracs system was installed on U.S. 19 and S.R. 60 and utilizes Adaptive Traffic Signal Control software, Traveler Information Systems and Incident Management Systems technology to improve travel times, reduce congestion, and improve safety. These two corridors have been completed and have demonstrated extremely positive benefits. Average travel times were reduced by between 8 - 14% with reductions in the PM Peak of up to 25%. CO₂ emissions showed reductions of 12% and injuries from rear-end crashes showed a 35-40% reduction. For every dollar spent on the system implementation seven dollars were received in benefits by the motoring public, either through saved time or reduced gas consumption.

The results from the initial deployment and additional studies indicate the same or more reductions in travel times, fuel consumption, air pollutants and accidents as the overall traffic management network grows. It is projected that over 1,800 short-term jobs and over 10,000 long-term jobs would be created with the implementation of this proposal. These improvements are key to goods movement, inter-county travel, access to the county's main employment centers, and for accessing major hurricane evacuation routes. Each of these areas contributes significant toward maintaining sustainable growth, growing our economy, and ensuring a high quality of life level within the County and beyond. Undertaking this project will undoubtedly improve travel in our region, create jobs, and advance the goals of the Recovery Act.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of the Pinellas County application. Please contact me or Monica Richter in my Washington office at (202) 225-5755 if you have any questions about my support for this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gus M. Bilirakis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "B".

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress