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

Dear Secretary Chao,  

I write in support of the City of Ruston’s application for a FY18 BUILD Grant for the Monroe Street Corridor Project.  

The Monroe Street Corridor Project is a multimodal transportation project that consists of seven interconnected components, including the construction of new two-lane roads, rehabilitation of existing roads, and the construction and improvement of sidewalks, bicycle paths and other streetscapes. These improvements are designed to enhance connectivity and safety for students and workers traveling between downtown Ruston, Louisiana Tech University and the I-20 Corridor. These improvements will have the added benefits of reducing traffic congestion and reducing liabilities for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.  

The City of Ruston has invested millions of local dollars in infrastructure, including over $80 million earmarked for infrastructure improvements through a 2016 citizen-passed sales tax initiative and $6.5 million for a new high-speed fiber optic network. The City has already invested over $3.5 million for the Monroe Street Corridor Project and is committed to meeting the nonfederal cost-share requirements. Five of the seven components have completed engineering and design and are ready to move ahead with construction, while the remaining two components are expected to complete engineering and design by 2019.  

Increased investment in infrastructure will be needed as the City of Ruston continues to grow. The Monroe Street Corridor Project is essential for Ruston to attract and accommodate future residents, students, and businesses. I ask that you give this project strong consideration for a FY18 BUILD Grant. Thank you for your consideration of this request.  

Sincerely,  

Ralph Abraham, M.D.  
Member of Congress
The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

As Governor of the great state of Louisiana, I fully support the city of Ruston’s application for the FY18 BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) Discretionary grant to redevelop Monroe Street using complete street principles. Louisiana has a very good policy regarding implementation of complete streets, but it is constrained due to limited state funds. Efforts such as this can bring complete streets from policy to implementation with the funding of this grant.

The rural community of Ruston is the parish seat of Lincoln Parish and offers a great quality of life and economic force to the regional economy. Like many of our regional hubs, Ruston is a focal point of collaborative economic development projects between the City and its partner, Louisiana Tech University, and that collaboration is evident in the application.

This community is forward thinking and has generated local revenue to address its infrastructure needs. They are spending approximately $80M for renovations to major storm water collection systems, street repairs and new road construction among other improvements. This application to convert Monroe Street to a complete street will advance safety, mobility, and private investment to facilitate additional growth. Unlike many applications, it demonstrates a very impressive cost benefit that is worthy of commendation.

My Administration has successfully made firm infrastructure commitments, with the support of federal BUILD funds. I know first-hand the importance of leveraging federal funds with local investments and hope to see more projects like this funded.

In closing, I would like to thank the US Department of Transportation for investing in Louisiana and I look forward to extending that partnership to local communities across the state of Louisiana. If I can provide additional information in support of this application, please do not hesitate to contact my Senior Special Assistant, Alicia Williams, at (225) 342-8006 or alicia.williams@la.gov.

Sincerely,

John Bel Edwards
Governor
July 13, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

As the Secretary of LA DOTD, I write to convey support for the City of Ruston’s request for the FY18 BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) Discretionary Grant to build the Monroe Street corridor using complete street principles. DOTD is prepared to support their efforts to achieve the policy goals set forth in the state’s complete street policy.

Ruston is a small community doing really big things in Louisiana. They have found a way to invest in real priorities that will sustain the community through a modernized infrastructure. A handful of communities have adopted the department approach to complete streets, and the leadership of Ruston in recognizes the value and importance of the comprehensive redevelopment of corridors. This application proposes to integrate various modes to make a highly traveled street safer and more modern in its design and utility.

At the convergence zone between Louisiana Tech University and downtown Ruston, the project area exhibits significant safety risks for all user modes: lacking accommodations for people traveling outside of automobiles; insufficient drainage that results in flooding and poor road conditions; deteriorating road surfaces; and nonexistent or insufficient street lighting contribute to the unsafe nature of the area.

The City of Ruston, and the university community considers the Monroe Street Project as a vital improvement to downtown and the University campus and fundamental to future economic growth in the area. This is exactly the type of projects the BUILD Grant program seeks to fund. This application leverages local non-federal investments while rehabilitating aged infrastructure. This community deserves to be rewarded for making such a meaningful investment in various components of its infrastructure.

Investment of public funding that both spurs economic redevelopment and increases the ability for all people to transverse and access a vibrant corridor is necessary and therefore I support pursuing the funding necessary to build the first phase of the University Avenue streetscape redevelopment. I encourage you to give this application your utmost attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D.
Secretary

SDW:rmv
The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590  

Re: Monroe Street Corridor Project Application for FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant  
Submitted by the City of Ruston, Louisiana

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write to express my support for the above referenced BUILD grant application. I am impressed with this proposal and believe it truly meets the purposes for which this grant program was established as is evidenced by how successfully the proposed project achieves the evaluation criteria.

Ruston is a rural community with a population of less than 23,000 people and thereby qualifies to compete for the 30% of grant funding that is reserved for rural project applications. Despite Ruston’s rural status, it supports a larger population because it is home to Louisiana Tech University which had its largest enrollment of 12,900 students during the last academic year. Moreover, Ruston has partnered with Louisiana Tech in the development of the Monroe Street Corridor Project proposal to increase efficiency and safety between the university, downtown Ruston, and the I-20 corridor. Through this and other partnerships, Ruston’s proposal also achieves BUILD’s purpose of enhancing investment through partnering.

Additionally, the Monroe Street Corridor Project achieves the BUILD Grant’s purpose of leveraging non-federal revenue as the City of Ruston recently passed a new sales tax to fund new investment in transportation infrastructure and economic growth for projects such as this. Over the 20 year life of the tax, it is expected to generate over $80 million of new investments.

For all of the above reasons as well as the additional ones set forth in Ruston’s application that address other grant evaluation criteria such as safety, quality of life, environmental protection, and innovation; I respectfully request that you give every appropriate consideration to this worthy project and support its selection. I believe the Monroe Street Corridor Project can have a meaningful impact on the City of Ruston and the region.

Thanking you for your consideration and with kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

[Signature]
John Kennedy  
United States Senator
July 16, 2018

Ms. Elaine Chao
Secretary
U. S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Ms. Chao,

I have been informed the City of Ruston in Louisiana is applying for funding through the FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Grant Program. I have received information the funding will be used for six interconnected multimodal transportation components that officials believe will increase efficiency and safety between Louisiana Tech University, downtown Ruston, and the Interstate 20 corridor.

Ruston is a rural community that is home to a growing university and located on a major east-west interstate. The community has taken the initiative to address improvements in water, sewer, and local transportation, as well as fund economic development projects. These projects have alleviated some transportation concerns, but I have been told there is still a critical need for further improvements that will be funded by this grant.

I applaud the City of Ruston for its efforts to enhance its transportation infrastructure and ask that you give your full consideration to this proposal. A report of the final decision would be helpful and appreciated. I may be reached through Leslie Quinn in my office at 318-918-5502 or Leslie.Quinn@mail.house.gov with any questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

MIKE JOHNSON
Member of Congress

MJ/Jq
June 10, 2018

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590  

RE: Letter of Support – City of Ruston FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

As the Lieutenant Governor of the state of Louisiana, I am writing to you today in full support of the City of Ruston’s FY 2018 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grant Program application to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

I understand that the City of Ruston is requesting $18,570,000 in BUILD funding to construct a new two-lane road to connect the I-20 service road to downtown Ruston, as well as connectors to and through the Louisiana Tech University Enterprise Campus.

Since I am familiar with the site and region, I can attest to the importance of this project to the local, state, and national economies to assist the city’s ability to bring in new business to this region. The purpose of this project is to provide a safe, efficient, and reliable route to both downtown Ruston and the Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus for local and commercial traffic, as well as students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the university through multiple forms of transportation.

The City of Ruston will provide funding for design services and Louisiana Tech University will provide in-kind support for any necessary right-of-way. The project will replace deficient roadways, add a new section of road, replace pedestrian paths with ADA compliant infrastructure, add bike paths, improve drainage to reduce flooding, and relocate overhead utilities. Project construction can begin the first quarter of 2019 as plans are in place awaiting funding.
Madam Secretary, thank you for your consideration in this matter and, once again, please know that I am in full-support of the City of Ruston’s BUILD Grant application.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Billy Nungesser
Lieutenant Governor

WHN/ls
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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

Dear Madame Secretary:

I strongly endorse and request your consideration of the City of Ruston’s FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant Application for the Monroe Street Corridor Project. We and the city are close collaborators on this project and the broader redevelopment and rebirth of the core of our city as a hub for technology-based economic development. We have worked separately and as partners to enhance physical and technology infrastructure, build a 21st century workforce, and create the high quality of life amenities in a safe and healthy community environment required for economic competitiveness. The city, the state, the university, and our corporate partners have been making substantial investments in this rebirth for many years, and we ask that the U.S. Department of Transportation join us in this next critical phase of our growth.

This BUILD funding will enhance the multimodal transportation offerings to both Louisiana Tech’s campus and the surrounding community during a time of unprecedented growth for the City of Ruston, the University, and our corporate partners. The Monroe Street Corridor Project will strengthen the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorist alike, along with increasing efficiencies in access and flow amongst foot, motor, and bike traffic. Louisiana Tech’s enrollment is at an all-time high, but that growth and the growth of new technology businesses has created new challenges in meeting the expanding need for new infrastructure to maximize our growth opportunities. The BUILD Grant funding will not only help solve the issues, but also create further opportunities for continued innovations and economic growth around Louisiana Tech University, the City of Ruston, and North Louisiana. This investment will help promote the development of innovative ideas and technology, foster economic development, and enhance the safety, health, and quality of life for all of our community and our region.

Thank you for your full consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

Leslie K. Guice
President

A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

P.O. BOX 3165 • RUSTON, LA 71272-0001 • TEL: (318) 257-3785 • FAX: (318) 257-2928
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIVERSITY
July 12, 2018

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

Dear Madame Secretary Chao:

North Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP), an Accredited Economic Development Organization serving 14 parishes (counties) in North Louisiana, strongly supports the City of Ruston’s BUILD Transportation Grant for $18,570,000. The grant enhances economic development not just for the City of Ruston but for the region as well. The transportation project improves the marketability and the accessibility of Louisiana Tech University’s Enterprise Campus, a 50 acre research park in Ruston, thus enhancing our collective opportunities to attract new technology companies to North Louisiana. The new multimodal, inner city transportation corridor increases Louisiana Tech’s and Ruston’s connectivity to North Louisiana’s growing technology corridor along Interstate 20 and appeals to a Millennial workforce who might wish to walk or bike to work at Enterprise campus.

The grant would help fund a project to build efficient, reliable, multimodal connectors to both downtown Ruston and to Louisiana Tech’s Enterprise campus. The project will benefit local and commercial traffic, as well as employees of companies located at Enterprise Campus, along with students, faculty, staff, and visitors to Louisiana Tech University. Additionally, the infrastructure improvements will help accommodate the growth that the City of Ruston is currently experiencing due to increased enrollment at Louisiana Tech University, by constructing a new two lane road that connects the I-20 service road to downtown Ruston and connectors leading to and throughout Enterprise Campus. The project will replace deficient roadways, add a new section of road, replace pedestrian paths with ADA compliant infrastructure, add bike paths, improve drainage to reduce flooding, and relocate overhead utilities.

The project is a strategic partnership between the City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech University to ensure infrastructure meets current needs, as well as, positions Ruston and North Louisiana for continued economic growth. The City of Ruston will provide funding for design services, and Louisiana Tech University will provide in-kind support for any necessary rights-of-way. Project construction is expected to begin the first quarter of 2019, depending on funding.

The City of Ruston’s application for a BUILD Transportation Grant aligns with NLEP’s regional strategic plan for economic development in North Louisiana. Part of our strategy centers around developing our emerging Interstate 20 Cyber Corridor, which created nearly 3,000 tech jobs in the last few years. Louisiana Tech University’s Enterprise Campus is integral to the Cyber Corridor’s continued growth and
success. Louisiana Tech University—a leader among universities in technology commercialization and innovative private partnerships—has established its position as a generator of and magnet for emerging technology companies in the fields of information technology, cyber security, micro/nano-systems, biotechnology, digital media, engineering and design. The University influences technology development along the I-20 Cyber Corridor between Shreveport and Monroe, where there are nearly 400 technology companies within an hour’s drive of the University.

Additionally, Louisiana Tech anticipates beginning construction on a new technology center in late 2018 to accommodate growing demand for space adjacent to the university’s highly productive research programs. Louisiana Tech has been ranked No. 2 in the nation amongst academic institutions in terms of innovation productivity as measured by the number of new inventions generated per research dollar expended, according to a report released by the Association of University Technology Managers. Louisiana Tech also ranked No. 2 nationally amongst academic institutions in terms of the rate of new spin-out or start-up companies.

NLEP respectfully urges the U.S. Department of Transportation to approve Ruston’s application for the $18.57 million transportation grant, which will support economic development in communities that so desperately need jobs and economic opportunities. According to the 2016 U.S. Census, North Louisiana has an average poverty rate of nearly 25 percent, and the City of Ruston has a poverty rate of 43 percent—more than three times higher than the national poverty rate of 12.7 percent.

Thank you for considering the City of Ruston’s grant application.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Scott Martinez, CEO
NLEP President
RESOLUTION NO. 1199 OF 2018

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CITY OF RUSTON BETTER UTILIZING INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT GRANT FROM UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

WHEREAS, the City of Ruston ("City") has prepared an application for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant from the United States Department of Transportation (the "BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant") under the fiscal year 2018 BUILD Transportation Program for the Monroe Street Corridor Project (the "Project"); and,

WHEREAS, the Project included in the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant application has significant local and regional impact; and,

WHEREAS, the application will be made with Louisiana Tech University as a partner; and,

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen desire to express their support and endorsement for the Project and the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF RUSTON, LOUISIANA:

§1. The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ruston, Louisiana support and endorse the Project and the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant.

§2. The Mayor is authorized and empowered to complete and submit said application and execute any and all documents necessary pursuant to such terms and conditions as he shall deem advisable and do any and all things necessary and proper to carry out this Resolution and to fulfill its objects and purposes.

§3. This Resolution shall become effective upon final adoption and signature of the Mayor.

Said Resolution having been read and considered by a quorum of the Board of Aldermen, on motion to adopt by Alderman Bruce Siegmund, seconded by Alderwoman Carolyn Cage, a record vote was taken and the following result was had:

YEA: ALDERWOMAN CAROLYN ELMORE CAGE
      ALDERMAN JEDD LEWIS
      ALDERWOMAN ANGELA R. MAYFIELD
      ALDERMAN JIM PEARCE
      ALDERMAN BRUCE SIEGMUND

NAY: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

WHEREUPON, the presiding officer declared the above Resolution duly adopted in full on this the 2nd day of July, 2018.

ATTEST:

[Signature]
LAURA HARTT, CLERK

[Signature]
RONNY WALKER, MAYOR