July 10, 2018

Secretary Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Room W12-140
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Re: 2018 BUILD Grant Application - Pasco County Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) PD&E Study

Dear Secretary Elaine Chao:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of Pasco County’s efforts to submit this Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) 2018 grant application for the Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The goal of the proposed project, which extends 37 miles through the rural area of Pasco County, is to provide connectivity to an existing trail network in East and West Pasco County that will support mobility and enhance community health to an underserved population. I respectfully request your consideration of Pasco County’s application for BUILD Grant funding.

The PD&E Study will determine the alignment and conceptual design of feasible build alternatives for the trail improvements and their social, economic, and environmental impacts. The 37-mile Bi-County trail will connect to three existing trail corridors (Starkey Trail Connector, Suncoast Trail, and Withlacoochee State Trail) within Pasco County and connect to a regional trail network.

The connection of these trail systems provides a vital link for rural areas within the County to the communities and developing areas throughout the region. The Bi-County trail will also provide multimodal options and economic development opportunities, especially along the sections that traverse through Land O’ Lakes and lie adjacent to the Wesley Chapel area – one of the top 40 fastest growing communities in the United States.

The PD&E study has wide-ranging support both locally with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Bicycle/Pedestrian Action Committee, and the citizens of Pasco County and elected officials. This project is identified as a priority project on the MPO’s list of “Priority Regional Trails” and was identified as a new project to be funded with the Pasco County Penny for Pasco Local Option Sales Surtax that was renewed by the voters in 2015.

Again, I encourage your consideration of this worthy effort. If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,

Mike Wells, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

/djb

ec: Dan Biles, P.E., County Administrator
Michael J. Carballa, P.E., Assistant County Administrator (Public Infrastructure)
Margaret W. Smith, P.E., Engineering Services Director/County Engineer
Deborah J. Bolduc, AICP, Transportation Capital Manager
Sam Beneck, Project Manager

Board of County Commissioners

727.847.2411 | West Pasco Government Center | 8731 Citizens Drive | New Port Richey, FL 34654
July 10, 2018

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

Re: Pasco County Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) PD&E Study BUILD Transportation Planning Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

This is to share with you my strong support for Pasco County’s Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application for the Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study.

As you know, in appropriating the funding for the Fiscal Year 2018 BUILD grant program, Congress directed that $15,000,000 be set aside to be awarded as grants for the planning, preparation or design of eligible projects. This application by Pasco County is ideally suited for funding as a BUILD Transportation Planning Grant. It also is consistent with your Administration’s focus on connecting rural and non-rural areas of our country.

The Pasco PD&E Study will determine the location and conceptual design of feasible build alternatives for the Bi-County trail improvements. This 37-mile trail will connect with three existing trail corridors (Starkey Trail Connector, Suncoast Trail, and Withlacoochee State Trail) within Pasco County and significantly enhance the regional trail network. The connection of these trail systems provides a vital link for rural areas within the County to the communities and developing areas throughout the region. The Bi-County trail also will provide multimodal options and economic development opportunities especially along the sections through Land O’ Lakes and adjacent to the Wesley Chapel area – one of the top 40 fastest growing communities in the United States.

BUILD Transportation Planning Grant funding is essential to initiating the PD&E study which also will incorporate robust public involvement that will be integral to the determination of the preferred alternative for the trail.
It is my hope that you will give Pasco County's application every possible consideration for this project that is so vital to our community. Please ensure that the grant awardees are selected on competitive basis so that taxpayers can be sure the most qualified applicants are chosen.

If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact my Deputy Chief of Staff, Summer Robertson, at (727) 232-2921.

Sincerely,

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress
July 10, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, Southeast
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

RE: Pasco County – DOT – BUILD – Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of Pasco County's efforts to obtain a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant. The goal of their proposed project, the Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, is to determine the location and conceptual design of feasible build alternatives for the Bi-County trail improvements. I respectfully request your consideration of this organization's application for federal funding.

If funded, the Orange Belt Trail will be a 37-mile connector to three heavily used trail corridors, the Starkey Trail Connector, Suncoast Trail and Withlacoochee State Trail. Additionally, it will provide a vital link for rural areas within Pasco County to communities and developing areas throughout the region and to multimodal options and economic development opportunities. This is especially true along the sections through Land O’ Lakes and adjacent to the Wesley Chapel area, which is one of our nation's 40 fastest growing communities.

Again, I encourage your consideration of this worthy cause. If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson

BN/jm

CC: Ms. Lisa Marshall, Regional Director, U. S. Senator Bill Nelson
July 9, 2018

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

Re: Pasco County Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) PD&E Study BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

As the chair of Pasco County’s Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), I am pleased to support this application for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) 2018 grant for the Bi-County Bike/Pedestrian Trail (Orange Belt Trail) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The BPAC’s meeting schedule did not allow for an endorsement vote prior to the BUILD application deadline, and while I can’t speak for the committee the proposed PD&E work is consistent with our long-standing policies and priorities for the development of Pasco’s bike and pedestrian network. In fact, the Bi-County trail has been a priority project for the committee and the county’s Metropolitan Planning Organization since the BPAC was officially established in 2013.

The PD&E Study will determine the location and conceptual design of feasible build alternatives for the trail improvements and their social, economic and environmental effects. The 37-mile Bi-County trail will connect with three existing trail corridors (Starkey Trail Connector, Suncoast Trail and Withlacoochee State Trail) within Pasco County and significantly enhance the regional trail network. The connection of these trail systems provides a vital link for rural areas within the County to the communities and developing areas throughout the region. The Bi-County trail will also provide multimodal options and economic development opportunities especially along the sections through Land O’ Lakes and adjacent to the Wesley Chapel area – one of the top 40 fastest growing communities in the United States.

The requested BUILD funding is essential to initiating the PD&E study which will also incorporate robust public involvement that will be integral to the determination of the preferred alternative for the trail.

I strongly urge your favorable consideration of this application in the support of Florida’s trail system. Your endorsement empowers the State to continue its strong history of eco-tourism and it generates regional economic activity.

Sincerely,

Randall H. Stovall, Ph.D.