

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705
April 14, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I strongly support the proposal by the City of Seattle to the U.S. Department of Transportation FASTLANE Grant Program for the South Lander Street Grade Separation and Railroad Safety Project. Grade separation at this critical junction of people and goods would significantly improve regional mobility of freight and ensure the safety of all users.

The crossing at South Lander Street has long been an impediment to the reliable movement of freight through the Port of Seattle. Today, nearly 500 track violations occur at the South Lander Street grade crossing. Roughly 100 train crossings occur daily, closing streets for an average 4.5 hours. These delays severely limit the mobility of tens of thousands of drivers on Interstate-5, Interstate-90, and arterials in the SODO manufacturing district and the bottleneck is only projected to worsen. By 2035, 3.5 million TEUs of cargo will travel through the Port further increase truck and rail freight congestion. In addition, 9.3 million riders will move through the intersection a year on Amtrak and Sounder commuter lines.

In one day, a grade separated crossing over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) tracks at South Lander Street would improve freight mobility by 3,000 rail cars and reduce truck delays, congestion, and carbon gas emissions for more than 13,000 vehicles. The South Lander Street Grade Separation and Railroad Safety Project would ensure dependable access to one of the largest port operations in the United States and provide safe access for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians.

Seattle is preparing for the arrival of Post-Panamax vessels upon completion of the Panama Canal Expansion, upgrading intermodal facilities to remain globally competitive. It is imperative that America's products have an efficient and reliable pathway to domestic and international markets and are not delayed in the last mile.

Grade separation at South Lander Street is essential to limiting congestion, boosting America's global competitiveness, and supporting Washington's 75,000 existing and 25,000 future jobs related to freight movement at the Port of Seattle. I urge you to give the City of Seattle's FASTLANE Grant application your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

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