



February 16, 2017

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

**RE: Core Capacity Grant Agreement for Caltrain's Peninsula Corridor  
Electrification Project**

Dear Secretary Chao:

First, let me thank you for returning to public service in such an important role for our country, and for your leadership to modernize and improve our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Second, on behalf of Stanford University, I am writing to express our support for Caltrain's Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP) and respectfully request your authorization of the Core Capacity Grant Agreement, which will enable this vital project to move forward.

You have received some recent correspondence that incorrectly characterized the PCEP project as a proposal from the California High Speed Rail Authority and suggested that you should not fund it for that reason. Our support for the Caltrain PCEP is based on its distinct, separate importance for our region for the reasons stated below. The two projects are separate as each project has a different governing board, funding sources and environmental processes. The University has not taken a position regarding the statewide high-speed rail project and that is not the purpose of this letter.

The University supports the electrification of Caltrain due to the critical role of this project in meeting the region's anticipated growth and managing traffic congestion. Electrification of the rail service coincides with Stanford's long-standing efforts to reduce peak hour trips, manage congestion on our local highways, streets and roads, and improve the region's air quality. Our students, staff and faculty rely heavily on Caltrain to get to and from our campus and we are currently one of the largest users of this public transit system.

The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary

February 16, 2017

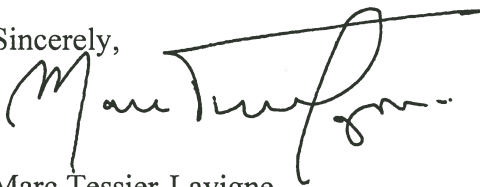
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**The commitment of \$1.3 billion in local, regional, and state matching funds for the Core Capacity Grant demonstrates the importance of the project for the region. The Peninsula Corridor between San Francisco and San Jose is a tremendous economic success story, generating jobs for residents, tax receipts for governments, products and technologies that have transformed the ways that we live and work. In order to sustain this innovation region ahead of competitor regions around the world, government, private sector business leaders and educational institutions such as Stanford have worked together for over 25 years on a plan to electrify the Caltrain commuter rail system. When complete, it will provide expanded capacity, improved speeds, reduced noise and pollution impacts on local communities, and greater reliability. We view these benefits from Caltrain electrification as absolutely critical to the continued economic competitiveness of this region.**

I offer our full support to the PCEP and encourage you to authorize the Core Capacity Grant Agreement.

In closing, if you ever would like to see some of the groundbreaking work that we are doing here at Stanford regarding research that has transportation implications, I hope you will let me know. Our Vice President for Public Affairs, David Demarest, would be happy to help arrange a visit. I believe you knew each other when you were Deputy Transportation Secretary and he was at the White House in the George H. W. Bush Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Tessier-Lavigne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marc Tessier-Lavigne