Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

As members of the Washington congressional delegation, we are writing to express our strong support for Douglas County's $21,000,000 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application for the Wenatchi Landing Interchange Project.

Located in central Washington and bordering the Columbia River, Douglas County is the 17th largest of Washington's 39 counties and has an estimated population of 44,500 residents, which has grown 70 percent since 2000. The area is famous for its apple orchards and is part of the Wenatchee Valley, internationally recognized as the Apple Capital of the World. Agriculture is the top employer in the county, representing one-third of the total workforce. Additionally, there has been an increased interest in the development of data centers and industries supporting new technology and energy innovation. These factors have contributed to the need for safe and reliable road infrastructure to serve this growing region.

The proposed project will support diversification of the local economy through development at the north end of the East Wenatchee Urban Growth Area and modernize the US and WA state highway interchange over the Columbia River in this critical transportation nexus. Phases 2 and 3 will complete the project by connecting the interchange to county roads to the north and east. The project is focused on improving critical safety elements to prevent injuries and fatalities while greatly improving the mobility and community connectivity needed in the region.

This project will create an estimated 7,500 jobs, and an economic impact between $586 million and $1.3 billion. With its focus on mixed use, the project will boost the local and regional economy as a destination, providing an array of opportunities for hospitality, high-density housing, office space, light industrial and commercial enterprises, as well as commercial recreation opportunities. This initiative will be a key driver for Douglas County's economic growth as the region continues to expand.

The framework for these efforts has been planned through extensive regional partnerships as outlined in the North End Master Site Plan, including 317-gross acres and 1.24 miles of Columbia River Frontage.

To date, the County has expended approximately $4 million of local funds and anticipates $2,395,476 in additional funding from regional partners towards the Wenatchi Landing Interchange. The County just received a $10 million Community Project Funding award in the Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to complete subsequent phases of the project. A BUILD grant will be critical to leverage established congressional support with the completion of Phase 1, potentially paving the way for multiple phases of this critical infrastructure project to come to fruition.

We urge you to fund the Wenatchi Landing Interchange project through the U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD grant program to provide critical funding for this project that will improve safety, connectivity, and mobility to this growing rural area. This will serve to support economic prosperity while mitigating adverse impacts of development and growth.

Thank you in advance for your full and fair consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress

Michael Baumgartner
Member of Congress

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress