

**MIKE CRAPO**  
U.S. SENATOR  
IDAHO

CO-CHAIRMAN, SENATE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND  
ENERGY EFFICIENCY CAUCUS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

WORKING FOREST CAUCUS

SENATE WESTERN CAUCUS

**United States Senate**

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:

BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
CHAIRMAN

FINANCE

JUDICIARY

BUDGET

July 3, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write in support of the City of Ponderay's *BUILD Grant Application*. I am told that the City of Ponderay has launched this grant in order to advance the construction of a railroad underpass that will connect Ponderay and Kootenai with Lake Pend Oreille, including a shoreline trail which leads to the downtown neighboring city of Sandpoint. This grant will cover engineering and construction funds related to the development of the underpass.

Recreation and outdoor activities are essential to the way of life for residents of Bonner County. I understand that this project will provide citizens a safe and easy access point to nature's amenities, while also connecting the communities in the surrounding area. Since children, teenagers, and adults alike regularly trespass across the railroad tracks in order to gain access to the lake, such improvements will provide a safe and easy access point for lake-goers. Lake Pend Oreille is only reachable to those in Sandpoint, but the construction of the railroad underpass will provide accessibility to those living in Bonner County, as well.

With a third of Ponderay's community relying on food stamps, the project will also help enhance the economy of the area. The city has invested in property within the vicinity of the underpass. Businesses starting at the underpass and running to the shoreline will be able to emerge to serve both residents and tourists. The city is hopeful that with improved infrastructure, businesses will be incentivized to move to the area further stimulating the economy.

I urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to give this grant application all due consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Crapo  
United States Senator

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 10, 2019

Secretary Elaine Chao  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20003-3660

Dear Secretary Chao:

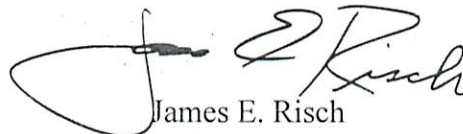
I write in support of the city of Ponderay's "Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development" (BUILD) grant application.

The city of Ponderay would use the BUILD grant to fund the design, engineering and construction of a pedestrian underpass beneath a busy double track rail line. Currently, the rail line effectively severs Ponderay and neighboring Kootenai from safe, effective and efficient waterfront access to Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille Bay Trail. Lake Pend Oreille is a major draw for tourism and recreation.

By creating a direct and safe link to the lake, the underpass will unleash economic development, tourism, and outdoor recreation for these two small cities. Trespass on the railroad right-of-way will be significantly reduced, if not eliminated. Construction of the underpass would also open up non-motorized commuter options between Ponderay, Kootenai and Sandpoint.

I support the city of Ponderay's BUILD application and efforts to improve safety and quality of life in both Ponderay and Kootenai. I urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to give the application all due consideration.

Very Truly Yours,



James E. Risch  
United States Senator

JER/kme



## Governor Brad Little

State Capitol :: Boise, Idaho 83720  
(208) 334-2100 :: [gov.idaho.gov](http://gov.idaho.gov)

July 3, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

Please accept this letter of support for the City of Ponderay's BUILD Planning Grant application.

This grant would help fund the final design and construction of an underpass that would connect the City of Ponderay to the lake shore and the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail. The City of Ponderay has conducted thorough work to ensure this project reaches its fullest potential in benefitting the quality of life for residents of Ponderay and nearby communities.

Building an underpass would allow for safer access to the lake. Currently, regular trespassing over railroad tracks occurs as residents attempt to access the shoreline. In addition, this construction project would coincide with a contamination cleanup effort on that shoreline. With the completion of these two projects, the City of Ponderay not only could increase quality of life, but also could provide incentives for businesses to relocate to this area, creating more job opportunities for residents.

As Governor of Idaho, I am committed to expanding and diversifying our economy. It is my goal to create every opportunity for our children and grandchildren to choose to stay in Idaho, and for the ones who have left to choose to return. Our citizen's ability to safely access outdoor recreational opportunities is an integral part of our traditions, and I believe this project would be a valuable investment for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Little', written in a cursive style.

Brad Little  
Governor of Idaho



## Idaho State Senate

### SENATOR JIM WOODWARD

July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

My purpose in writing is to respectfully request your full consideration of the City of Ponderay BUILD grant application. The project is to design and construct a railroad underpass which will connect the city to Lake Pend O'reille, one of our great local assets. Lake Pend O'reille is the largest lake in Idaho and the fifth deepest in the nation. It is significant to the community and to the nation. The U.S. Navy first utilized Lake Pend O'reille in World War II as a secure, inland recruit training location. The Navy continues to have a presence with an Acoustic Research Detachment that furthers national defense efforts through submarine development programs.

I stand in support of the project for several reasons:

- 1.) Safety – The project will eliminate a significant safety hazard. Currently, people often cross an active rail line to reach the shores of Lake Pend O'reille. If you ever have the opportunity to stand at the edge of our beautiful lake, it will be obvious why people take that risk.
- 2.) Economic Development – Our local economy in northern Idaho has, over the past thirty years, transitioned from a focus on resource extraction to one of resource enjoyment. Ponderay is already a significant part of the local economy. With the connector in place, Ponderay can more fully develop access to and enjoyment of Lake Pend O'reille for local residents and the ever-growing number of visitors.
- 3.) Commitment – The City of Ponderay is committed to the project as evidenced by a decade long push for completion. A feasibility study is complete, the city has purchased property adjacent the trailhead, and the project has support from residents, property owners, local and state government, and the railroad.

We hope that now can be the time to move forward with this key local project that will provide benefit in so many ways. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Woodward".

Jim Woodward

Idaho State Senator / Bonner and Boundary Counties



Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth St.  
Ponderay, Idaho 83852

Mayor Geiger,


Thank you for asking for my opinion of the City of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD application. There are a number of reasons why I am supportive of this project, and I am appreciative that Ponderay is looking for ways to improve access to one of the primary recreational opportunities in our District. Receipt of the BUILD Construction Grant will help immeasurably in realizing the goals of the project.

By moving forward with a planned railroad underpass, Ponderay will be dramatically increasing pedestrian safety by removing the need to cross two sets of heavily used railroad tracks in order to get to the lake. I can speak to the inherent dangers of crossing these tracks as I did it often with my family when we lived in Ponderay. The planned underpass would allow others from different communities to access to the shores of Lake Pend Orielle more easily, and give a point of entrance to the popular shoreline trail that winds along the lake from Ponderay to Sandpoint.

Another ancillary benefit of the project will be the potential for further commercial development in Ponderay, which will bring added economic benefit to the area. Businesses will naturally be inclined to serve new market opportunities that arise, and this will add to the stability, and vitality, of Ponderay, as well as Bonner County in general.

I am excited at the prospect of seeing this project completed, and strongly support your efforts to receive the BUILD Construction Grant.

Lord Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.G. Dixon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Rep. Sage G. Dixon



**Brad Little**, Governor  
**Tom Kealey**, Director

June 24, 2019

Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth Street  
Ponderay, ID 83852

Dear Mayor Geiger,

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my support to the City of Ponderay for their BUILD Grant. Lake Pend Oreille is a jewel for the communities of Sandpoint and Ponderay and a vibrant tourism asset. Creating a link between downtown Ponderay and the bike trails and shoreline will create a more livable Ponderay. This grant will create new economic development opportunities in the downtown area by providing a more direct, safer, and community friendly path underneath the railroad to State Highway 200.

As the Director of Idaho Commerce, I committed to making Idaho the best place in the United States to successfully start or expand a business. Our teams at Idaho Commerce work every day with companies that are considering Idaho as a place for their expansions. Having vibrant, safe, and active communities are vital to businesses that want to expand. We look forward to adding the Lakeshore Connection Project to the list of amenities in Ponderay.

Think of my team as an extension of yours. I look forward to working with you, now and long into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Kealey".

Tom Kealey  
Director



State of Idaho  
Department of  
Environmental Quality

2110 Ironwood Parkway • Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814 • (208) 769-1422  
www.deq.idaho.gov

Brad Little, Governor  
John H. Tippetts, Director

June 26, 2019

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

Re: Letter of Support for City of Ponderay, Idaho BUILD Grant Application

Dear Madam Secretary:

The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail (POBT) curves along the shoreline of Lake Pend Oreille, the largest natural lake in Idaho. Situated within a rare undeveloped corridor on the lake's northern waterfront in Bonner County, the trail provides a peaceful setting for an easy close-to-town walk or bike with striking views of the lake and surrounding mountains. While the current trail stretches over 1.5 miles, the final project is envisioned as a 2 mile trail with a 20 acre municipal park system connecting three shoreline communities - Sandpoint, Ponderay and Kootenai.

This BUILD Grant will advance an important community project: the construction of a railroad underpass that will connect Ponderay and Kootenai to Lake Pend Oreille and the POBT shoreline trail that leads to downtown Sandpoint. This project will enhance the quality of life and health for residents of Ponderay, Kootenai and Sandpoint by providing safe and easy access to nature along this already popular shoreline trail. It will provide a transportation alternative by creating a more direct non-motorized route between Ponderay and Sandpoint.

In 2009, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) Brownfields Program was awarded a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Coalition Assessment Cooperative Agreement in the amount of \$650,000 for the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail Brownfields Assessment Coalition. Coalition partners included IDEQ, and the cities of Ponderay, Kootenai, Sandpoint, and Bonner County. Environmental assessments were undertaken on nineteen properties and identified the need for cleanup on one property; the former Panhandle Smelting and Refining Company.

This project coincides with the cleanup of the former Panhandle Smelting and Refining Company. On June 5, 2019, the City of Ponderay was awarded an EPA Brownfields Multipurpose Grant in the amount of \$800,000 to cleanup the former smelter property. Now is the perfect time to plan and construct an underpass to allow for the use of that lakeshore property, which was unusable due to the historic mining contamination. The two projects together open up a large amount of shoreline to future use.

Should you have any questions please contact me at 208.373.0565

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Traynor", is written over a horizontal line.

Eric Traynor, DEQ Brownfields Program Manager

c: Dan Redline, DEQ Coeur d'Alene Regional Office  
Steve Gill, DEQ Coeur d'Alene Regional Office



**Your Safety • Your Mobility  
Your Economic Opportunity**

**IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**  
600 W. Prairie Ave. • Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815-8764  
(208) 772-1200 • [itd.idaho.gov](http://itd.idaho.gov)

June 24, 2019

The Honorable Steve Geiger, Mayor  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth Street  
Ponderay, Idaho 83852

Mayor Geiger,

District One of the Idaho Transportation Department is in support of the City of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD construction grant application to fund design and engineering, planning, environmental assessment and construction of a railroad undercrossing and connecting city street. The project which will provide this community with better mobility and safe access to Lake Pend Oreille beneath the BNSF tracks improving connectivity in the most populated part of Bonner County while enhancing the city's economic opportunity for responsible growth.

The Idaho Transportation Department recognizes the importance of multi-modal connectivity in the Ponderay-Kootenai-Sandpoint area as a growing element in the overall transportation network. The undercrossing will improve the overall mobility of Ponderay and Kootenai residents by allowing direct access to the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail for commuting and recreational bicycle and walking trips as opposed to using the shoulders of State Highway 200. The City of Ponderay's Transportation Plan and the SH-200 Corridor Plan have strong trail components that, when implemented, will round out the transportation network in the growing urban area.

The undercrossing will provide the needed safe access to the trail and shoreline as well as help eliminate the ongoing trespassing over the railway's right of way. District 1 will work with the city of Ponderay on the proposed new city street approach to State Highway 200 as well as taking the next step in furthering the concepts embodied in the SH-200 Corridor Study.

The Idaho Transportation Department sees the development of this undercrossing and the new city street with connection to State Highway 200 as driving more economic development for the city of Ponderay and Bonner County.

Sincerely,

Damon L. Allen, P.E.  
District 1 Engineer

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KOOTENAI MAYOR

Nancy Lewis

CITY Clerk-Treasurer

Ronda L. Whittaker

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Sundquist

James Macha

Grace Bauer

Daniel Schock

July 3, 2019

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

Re: BUILD Planning Grant Application for Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail

Honorable Elaine Chao,

Please accept this letter of support from the city of Kootenai for a BUILD Planning Grant application for the design, engineering and construction of a pedestrian underpass to provide access from the city of Ponderay to Lake Pend d'Oreille and the shoreline trail. We have been a partner in planning the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail connection for many years, and are pleased to support the critical engineering and construction work needed to link our communities to Lake Pend Oreille.

The Concept Plan and the Master Trail and Interpretive Plan for the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail both envision a trailhead one day in the city of Kootenai. This trailhead will access a pathway leading to an underpass, which will give our two communities much needed access to the shoreline. Currently, neither Kootenai nor Ponderay have safe access to the lake or the trail that leads to Sandpoint. As our City's motto makes clear, Kootenai is where families grow. We are a great place to raise a family and are home to Kootenai Elementary School. Our town and the families who live here will greatly benefit from better trail connectivity and a safe crossing for children and families to get to the lake and the shoreline trail.

Safety is one of our highest priorities in Kootenai. This project will dovetail nicely with planned improvements to U.S. Highway 200 through Kootenai, which includes pedestrian crossings across this busy highway. With a safe underpass to the lakeshore, students from Kootenai Elementary and families in Kootenai's residential neighborhoods will have much safer access to neighboring communities and our area's most popular outdoor asset, Lake Pend d'Oreille.

Thank you for sponsoring this grant application and know that we back this proposal 100 percent.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lewis, Mayor  
City of Kootenai



June 13, 2019

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

Re: City of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD Grant

Dear Secretary Chao:

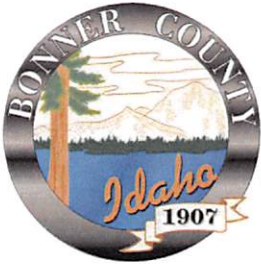
The Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD Grant will bring our community closer to realizing an important and long envisioned project, building on several joint efforts by both Ponderay and Sandpoint as well as the wider community. Construction of a railroad underpass connecting the cities of Ponderay and Kootenai to Lake Pend Oreille and a shoreline trail that provides a much-needed pedestrian connection to the City of Sandpoint and Sandpoint City Beach. Further, the project improves safety and furthers economic development for our region.

Having invested substantially in property acquisition for the Pend Oreille Trail and in concert with the City of Ponderay, the City of Sandpoint is committed to the ultimate vision of a safe access connecting the two cities along the waterfront. The critical element to this vision is a pedestrian and emergency vehicle underpass within the City of Ponderay in order to mitigate the dangerous, yet often, pursued route to the trail and waterfront by children and adults alike across the tracks as well as providing for a much-needed emergency access route to this already well utilized trail.

A fully realized transportation and recreational amenity such as that proposed may also have a significant positive impact on economic development and property values. Both seasonal and non-seasonal business attraction, retention and expansion within our area is dependent upon the types of recreational amenities that are made available, especially important given Sandpoint's opportunity zone, located within one mile of the underpass. Finally, particularly in rural areas trails are associated with increased physical activity, improved public health, and non-motorized transportation alternative. Connection of the trail between Ponderay and Sandpoint will help achieve these important initiatives.

Please accept this letter as my highest recommendation for awarding the Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD Grant and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information or insight.

Shelby Rognstad  
Mayor



# **Bonner County**

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## **Board of Commissioners**

Jeff Connolly

Dan McDonald

Steven Bradshaw

July 9, 2019

Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth St.  
Ponderay, ID 83852

Mayor Geiger,

The Bonner County Commissioners would like to extend their support for the City of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD application.

This BUILD Planning and construction Grant will advance an important community project: the construction of a railroad underpass that will connect Ponderay and Kootenai to Lake Pend Oreille and a shoreline trail that leads to downtown Sandpoint and Sandpoint City Beach.

Trails and recreation opportunities in Bonner County provide incentive for businesses to locate, or relocate, to this area. This project builds on other pathway projects that help connect visitors and residents to community destinations and the outdoors.


The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail is a valued community asset, but can now only be accessed from Sandpoint. An underpass in Ponderay will open up this trail to the larger community.

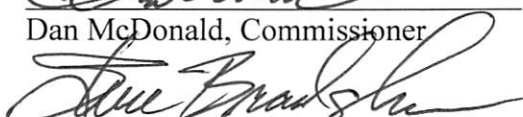
Please accept this letter of support as an addition to you grant application.

Sincerely,

### **BONNER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Connolly, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan McDonald, Commissioner

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven Bradshaw, Commissioner

**Montana Rail Link**  
101 International Drive  
Missoula, MT 59808July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth St  
Ponderay, ID 83852

Subject: Letter of Support (City of Ponderay, Idaho BUILD Grant Application)

Mayor Geiger,

Montana Rail Link supports the City of Ponderay's BUILD grant application. The grant would fund the construction, design and engineering of a railroad underpass that would connect the City of Ponderay to the shore of Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille Bay Trail. While we are certainly supportive, Montana Rail Link would need to approve the final design of the project.

Once completed, the project will offer the community several benefits supported by the railroad including:

- An underpass at this location would improve safety by providing legal grade-separated access to the lake
- The project would provide safe and easy access to nature along the already popular shoreline trail
- It would provide a transportation alternative by creating a more direct non-motorized route between Ponderay and Sandpoint
- The Pend Oreille Bay Trail is a valued community asset but can now only be accessed from neighboring Sandpoint. An underpass in Ponderay would open this trail to the larger community

Montana Rail Link expects our freight volume to grow in the years to come. We look forward to working with the City of Ponderay on the planning for this project to make sure it serves the needs of the community while allowing for future growth of the railroad.

Kind Regards,



Ross Lane



BNSF Railway

Eastern Idaho Railroad

Boise Valley Railroad

Federal Railroad  
Administration

Union Pacific Railroad

Great Northwest  
Railroad

Idaho Chief of Police  
Association

Idaho Department of  
Education

Idaho Northern and  
Pacific Railroad

Idaho Public Utilities  
Commission

Idaho Sheriffs Association

Idaho State Police

Idaho Transportation  
Department

Montana Rail Link Inc.

Railroad Labor Unions

July 9, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

Idaho Operation Lifesaver (IDOL) is an Idaho non-profit organization that promotes safety at rail grade crossings for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic through education, enforcement and engineering solutions. Our goal is to eliminate death and serious injury at all rail crossing points.

One area of grave concern is trespass by pedestrians on active rail corridors. In fact, the incidence of death and serious injury resulting from pedestrians trespassing is increasing. The solution is to eliminate points of conflict between pedestrians and railways. One of the safest ways to accomplish this is to provide a grade separation, or underpass, to safely move pedestrians across active rail corridors.

IDOL would like to congratulate the Friends of the Pend d' Oreille Bay Trail for their efforts to form partnerships and for the foresight and hard work to provide safe pedestrian connectivity of the trail to the City of Ponderay.

IDOL fully supports this BUILD project that will allow for the proper design, engineering and environmental work for a safe pedestrian underpass across a very active rail corridor. This project supports our vision of zero fatalities at rail crossings.

Sincerely,



Brent Jennings, P.E.  
Chairman – Idaho Operation Lifesaver

# Northside Fire District

P.O. Box 181

Ponderay, Idaho 83852

Phone: 208-265-4114

Fax: 208-255-7164

E-mail: [bmitton@northsidefire.org](mailto:bmitton@northsidefire.org)

Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth St.  
Ponderay, ID 83852

Dear Mayor Geiger,

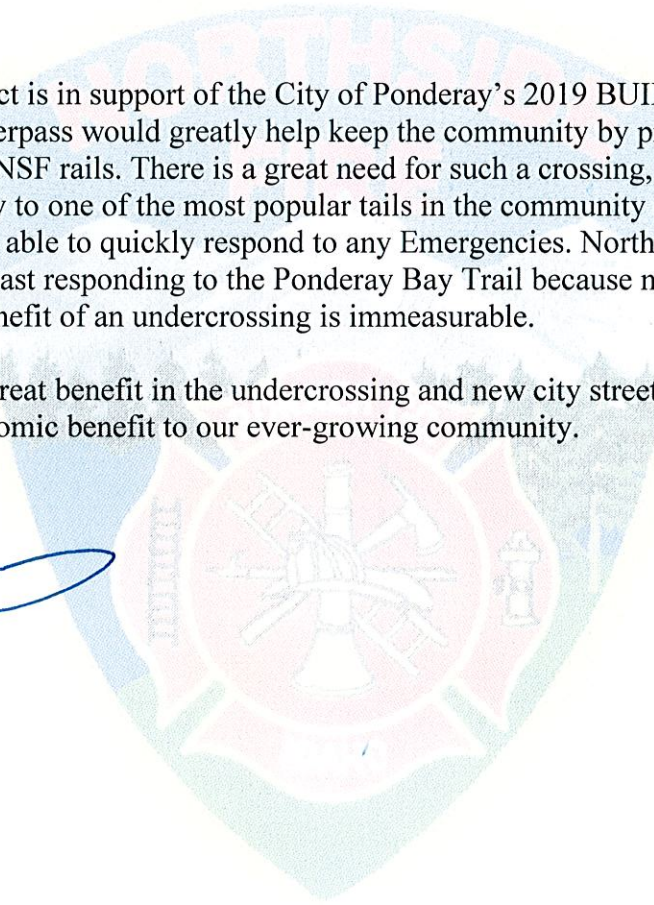
Northside Fire District is in support of the City of Ponderay's 2019 BUILD Grant application. The underpass would greatly help keep the community by providing a Safe crossing under the BNSF rails. There is a great need for such a crossing, it would allow public to travel safely to one of the most popular trails in the community and Emergency Services access to be able to quickly respond to any Emergencies. Northside Fire has been delayed in the past responding to the Ponderay Bay Trail because no such crossing exists. The public benefit of an undercrossing is immeasurable.

Northside Fire sees great benefit in the undercrossing and new city street for public safety and in potential economic benefit to our ever-growing community.

Sincerely,



Brad Mitton  
Fire Chief



**Local Highway Technical Assistance Council**

3330 Grace Street  
Boise, Idaho 83703

Phone 208.344.0565  
Fax 208.344.0789  
Toll Free 1.800.259.6841

[www.lhtac.org](http://www.lhtac.org)



Gilbert Hofmeister  
**Chairman**

Todd Smith  
**Vice Chairman**

Robert (BJ) Berlin  
**Secretary/Treasurer**

Jeff R. Miles, P.E.  
**Administrator**

July 8, 2019

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of Idaho’s Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC), I’m writing to express support for the City of Ponderay’s Lakeshore Connection Project planning grant to fund design and engineering, planning and environmental assessment of a railroad undercrossing to provide this community with access to Lake Pend Oreille and improve connectivity in the most populated part of Bonner County.

LHTAC provides technical assistance to 288 local jurisdictions around Idaho and administers federal highway funds for communities such as Ponderay. LHTAC has administered many Federal-aid projects through our stewardship agreement with the Idaho Transportation Department. We are committed to providing project administration for the City of Ponderay if the city is successful in securing a BUILD planning grant.

This worthy project will provide the underserved community of Ponderay and the neighboring bedroom community of Kootenai with much-needed access to Lake Pend Oreille and a shoreline trail that now is accessible only from the City of Sandpoint. Currently, many residents of Ponderay access the lake by trespassing across two busy Montana Rail Link tracks. The undercrossing is needed to provide safe passage and to allow emergency vehicles from Ponderay to respond to incidents along the lakeshore. Without the underpass, emergency access can be achieved only on foot.

This project will also include a new city street connecting to State Highway 200, and provide an opportunity for economic development in the heart of Ponderay. LHTAC stands ready to assist with the planning of this highway connection, as well as the design and engineering of the undercrossing.

Sincerely,

Jeff R. Miles, P.E.  
Administrator

**Council Members**

**Association of Idaho Cities**  
Mayor Mac Pooler  
City of Kellogg

Mayor Robert (BJ) Berlin  
City of Roberts

Mayor Diana Thomas  
City of Weiser

**Idaho Association of Highway Districts**  
Commissioner Neal Gier  
Buhl Highway District

Commissioner Terry Werner  
Post Falls Highway District

Commissioner Gilbert Hofmeister  
Power County Highway District

**Idaho Association of Counties**  
Commissioner Phil Lampert  
Benewah County

Commissioner Mark Rekow  
Gem County

Commissioner Todd Smith  
Madison County

**Ex-Officio Members**  
Jessica Harrison, Executive Director  
Association of Idaho Cities  
  
Nick Veldhouse, Executive Director  
Idaho Association of Highway Districts  
  
Seth Grigg, Executive Director  
Idaho Association of Counties





## Idaho Walk Bike Alliance

P.O. Box 1594 Boise, ID 83701  
(208) 345-1105  
[www.idahowalkbike.org](http://www.idahowalkbike.org)

June 20, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance strongly supports the City of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD application to provide access to Lake Pend Oreille. Our organization's mission is to promote active transportation as healthy, safe and reliable for all Idahoans, and this project pushes this community in the same direction.

This project will enhance the quality of life and health for residents of Kootenai and Ponderay by providing safe and easy access to nature along this already popular shoreline trail. The proposed underpass will provide a more direct non-motorized route between Ponderay and Sandpoint. A non-motorized network is critical for the safety of community members. Currently, citizens who wish to access the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail without the use of a car regularly trespass across two sets of railroad tracks, because there is no infrastructure to support them. The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail will eventually connect two towns using an existing trail, thus encouraging its residents to bike or walk rather than add to congestion, road wear and tear, and reduce easy exercise opportunities.

The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail is a valued and popular community asset which can now only be accessed from Sandpoint. An underpass in Ponderay will open this trail up to the larger community. Businesses yearn to locate close to biking and walking traffic; these businesses flourish and are sought out by today's families, youth, and active aging community members. They build a sense of community.

We support this project because it furthers the economic, recreational, health and transportation potential for Ponderay and the surrounding area.

Please call if you would like to discuss in more detail.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Gibson  
Executive Director

Walking. Biking. Going Places.





July 9, 2019

Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 4th St.  
Ponderay, Idaho 82852

**RE: BUILD Transportation Discretionary Funding- 2019**

Dear Reviewers:

The Bonner County Area Transportation Team, which includes all of local jurisdictions involved in the systematic coordination, planning, development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in the geographic area of Bonner County, is pleased to provide support for the City of Ponderay's application for the Build Planning Grant for 2019. This funding will advance the planning and design of pedestrian railroad underpass that will connect the cities of Ponderay and Kootenai to Sandpoint- which serves as the county seat and the largest jurisdiction in the Urban Area. Most important, this underpass will provide safe passage for all residents and visitors to the shores of the large Lake Pend Oreille, which lies on the other side of 2 sets of mainline railroad tracks which traverse the county.

The City of Ponderay has worked with both private and public funding sources in seeking financial and project support for this undertaking. This buy-in at many levels will certainly enhance of the success of the overall project in terms of quality of life and economic benefits to the area.

Ponderay is an active voting member of our Transportation Team and has been actively engaged for decades in developing multi-modal transportation options for their city which lies along the very busy US 95 and SH 200. Ponderay serves as the commercial center of the county which enhances the need for accessibility by all persons who live, recreate, work and visit this area.

We urge your favorable support of this landmark project for our area.

Commissioner Jeff Connolly  
BCATT Chair



Proudly serving our business partners in North Idaho and Eastern Washington

July 15, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce in enthusiastic support of the application for a federal BUILD grant to fund the design, engineering and construction of an underpass to connect Ponderay to Lake Pend Oreille and the shoreline trail to Sandpoint.

The mission of the Chamber is to be an advocate of business development and tourism for the Greater Sandpoint area, and as such, we support community initiatives seeking to support and enhance the quality of life locally, and provides amenities for visitors to our area. The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail is an asset to the community because it offers an opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors near downtown Sandpoint and City Beach. Our current visitor guide features the annual Bay Trail Fun Run and includes the trail on our Sandpoint map.

A major shortcoming of the trail is it can only be accessed from Sandpoint. We fully support the goal of the city of Ponderay and the Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail to connect this spectacular shoreline trail to Ponderay and Kootenai by way of a railroad underpass. This will improve the quality of life for people living and working in those communities and will provide the opportunity to explore more places and create loop bike routes. In addition, it opens up the possibility of hosting athletic and civic events throughout all three of these neighboring communities, benefitting all three economically.

An underpass will also improve safety by providing legal and safe access to the lake. Currently children and adults regularly trespass across two sets of railroad track to access the shoreline. The city of Ponderay has also invested in property in the vicinity of the underpass and plan on creating a commercial district street leading to a pedestrian-only underpass. This will also encourage new development in the area.



Administrative Offices and Visitor Center

1202 Fifth Avenue ▪ P.O. Box 928 ▪ Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

p. 800.800.2106 or 208.263.2161 ▪ f. 208.265.5289 ▪ SandpointChamber.com ▪ info@sandpointchamber.com



By improving our trail connections and outdoor amenities, we make our community a more attractive place to live, and making it more attractive for businesses looking to relocate here. While this is an expensive project, the need for it is clear. We recognize the importance of this federal grant to make this vital trail connection a reality and wholeheartedly support this endeavor.

Sincerely,

*Kate McAlister*

Kate McAlister  
President/CEO



Administrative Offices and Visitor Center

1202 Fifth Avenue ▪ P.O. Box 928 ▪ Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

p. 800.800.2106 or 208.263.2161 ▪ f. 208.265.5289 ▪ SandpointChamber.com ▪ info@sandpointchamber.com



June 20, 2019

Secretary of Transportation  
3311 W. State Street  
Boise, ID 83707-1129

Bonner General Health is genuinely passionate about helping individuals improve community health and quality of life. The City of Ponderay's BUILD planning grant application has the ability to promote healthy alternatives to community members experiencing health needs that were identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment that we conducted in 2016 and were: 1) Obesity, 2) Mental Health, 3) Suicide and 4) Child Abuse & Neglect.

Bonner General Health understands how critical it is to address the health needs in our community by providing as much support and access to health resources. Access to outdoor recreation and alternative transportation to the residents of Ponderay could increase physical activity, alternative transportation, and access to support services.

Please accept this letter of support for the City of Ponderay's BUILD application. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Binnall, Manager of Community Development  
208.265.3390





July 10, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail, I'd like to express our wholehearted support for the city's application for a federal BUILD Planning Grant to fund the Lakeshore Connection Project, which would provide much-needed access to the lakeshore for the cities of Ponderay and Kootenai.

The Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail formed out of a committee established by former Sandpoint Mayor Ray Miller in 2005 to determine how to bring the shoreline trail into public hands. With the help of the National Park Service and public involvement, we created a conceptual plan for the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail. Our group reorganized as the Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail, 501C3 organization, in order to serve as a private partner to the cities of Sandpoint, Ponderay and Kootenai in achieving the goal of connecting these communities with a shoreline trail.

In 2014, we finalized a successful campaign to open the 1.4-mile trail to the public by raising funds to support the cities' acquisition of private waterfront. However, the trail still does not truly connect these three communities. The bulk of this shoreline trail is actually within the city limits of Ponderay, but the only legal and safe access is through Sandpoint. While the trail serves nearly 200 people per day in fair weather, these people mostly use it as an out-and-back recreation, exercise opportunity. A connection to Ponderay would allow many more people to benefit from this trail.

An undercrossing would also resolve the problem of trespass across the busy, double set of railroad tracks in Ponderay. We counted 260 trespassers crossing the tracks during a recent two-week period, using a motion sensor camera we installed in a nearby tree. The trespassers were of all ages and many were clearly motivated to access the lake, carrying inner tubes, towels, fishing rods, coolers and even kayaks.

In 2014 and 2015, the Friends worked with the cities and a design and engineering firm to produce a Master Trail and Interpretive Plan for the trail. During the planning process, we gathered stakeholder and public input on potential improvements through meetings, events and a survey. The Ponderay underpass emerged as a top priority from this public input. This connection is clearly needed for a number of reasons, chief among them safety

for those determined to get to the lake, despite the barrier of the railroad tracks, creating well-worn trails through the railroad's right-of-way. The people of Ponderay have an incredible outdoor amenity at their doorstep, but the railroad tracks prevent this impoverished community from enjoying the benefits of the region's greatest natural asset.

We are convinced that this underpass will improve the health and quality of life for the residents of Ponderay – and neighboring Kootenai. Easy, safe access to a natural shoreline trail will be an incentive for residents to get outside and walk, bike or swim along the lakeshore. This access will be a draw for businesses and visitors to Ponderay, helping to boost the local economy. Access to the trail will give an alternative commuting route between Ponderay and Sandpoint. Our organization recently hired a research firm to conduct a scientific survey of Ponderay voters that show a majority – 63 percent – support a temporary sales tax increase to help fund access to the shoreline. We are committed to helping get the word out about this opportunity if and when the City of Ponderay decides to place the local option sales tax measure on the ballot. However, Ponderay cannot afford to build the undercrossing alone and must have federal funds to correct this deficiency in their transportation infrastructure.

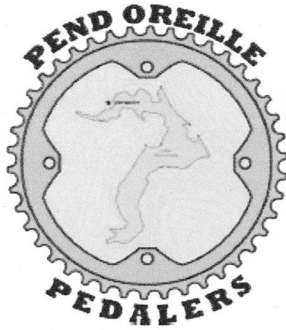
The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail planning has progressed alongside plans for the eventual cleanup of the Brownfields site at Black Rock, which currently has unsafe levels of lead and arsenic on-site and can never be used by the property owner, or the public, until it is cleaned up. The underpass, in short, is closely tied to the cleanup of a human health and environmental hazardous area along the shoreline and commercial, civic and residential development near the lakeshore.

The planning and preparation for this project has been deliberate and many years in the making. The biggest challenge facing Ponderay in this effort has been financial. A BUILD planning grant will make possible a critical piece of community infrastructure and vital key to connectivity in Bonner County. We are honored to be a partner in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Susan Drumheller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Susan Drumheller, President  
Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail  
P.O. Box 1607  
Sandpoint, ID 83864  
[Susandrumheller29@gmail.com](mailto:Susandrumheller29@gmail.com)  
(208) 946-0846



# PEND OREILLE PEDALERS

P.O. Box 2451  
Sandpoint, ID 83864  
[www.pendoreillepedalers.com](http://www.pendoreillepedalers.com)

July 10, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing on behalf of the Pend Oreille Pedalers bicycle club in support of the city of Ponderay's application for a BUILD Grant to fund a railroad undercrossing that will connect the communities of Ponderay and Kootenai to the lakeshore and the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail.

The Pend Oreille Pedalers bike club supports projects that improve the non-motorized transportation options for people in our area, as well as trails that provide recreational opportunities. The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail can do both. The trail currently is an easy and popular bike path along the shoreline for people to exercise and enjoy our beautiful outdoors. With a safe crossing, it could also provide a route for people to travel by bicycle between Sandpoint and Ponderay and Kootenai. Now the shortest route between these cities is the busy and narrow U.S. Highway 200. The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail would be a much safer and preferable route than along this busy highway.

The addition of the underpass in Ponderay will not only benefit the people of Ponderay, but also the entire Bonner County. Not only will access to the Lake Pend Oreille shoreline be greatly improved for local families and visitors, but this underpass will go a long way toward achieving the kind of non-motorized connectivity that we desire and need for our quality of life in this growing community.

We thank you for considering this important community project to improve safety and connectivity in our area.

Sincerely,

Mike Murray  
President, Pend Oreille Pedalers



# Lake Pend Oreille School District #84

Administration Office □ 901 N. Triangle Drive □ Ponderay, Idaho 83852

Phone: 208/263-2184 □ Fax: 208/263-5053

Web: [www.lposd.org](http://www.lposd.org)

June 18, 2019

Dear Mayor Geiger,

The Lake Pend Oreille School District would like to support the city of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD application for the acquisition of funds for a pedestrian only underpass that will connect Ponderay and Kootenai to Lake Pend Oreille and the shoreline trail that leads to Sandpoint.

This project will enhance the quality of life and health for residents of Kootenai and Ponderay by providing safe and easy access to nature along this already popular shoreline trail. There are scores of youth that would benefit from safe access to this wonderful community treasure.

In addition, the underpasses strategic location within our community landscape would allow enhanced access to outdoor classroom opportunities for our students. Place-based learning activities are crucial elements of a well rounded education. Community resources such as this can and should be critical components of deep, meaningful, and relevant learning.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Shawn M. Woodward

Superintendent

Lake Pend Oreille School District





June 20, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

Kaniksu Land Trust supports the City of Ponderay's Lakeshore Connection Project BUILD application to provide access to Lake Pend Oreille. This project will provide important health and quality of life enhancements for residents of Kootenai and Ponderay by facilitating safe, legal, and easy access to nature along a popular shoreline trail. Under current conditions, community members regularly trespass across two sets of railroad tracks to gain access to the lake.

Though surrounded by public land, a surprising number of our county's residents have limited opportunities to spend time in natural settings, an experience that has been proven to improve physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, as well as contributing to an ethic of responsible stewardship and conservation. The construction of an underpass at this location will expand the impact of this remarkable outdoor amenity to a new subset of our community, and also coincides with the cleanup of an adjacent brownfield site for which the City has received a substantial grant for clean-up from EPA.

Enhancements to outdoor amenities such as the Pend d'Oreille Trail continue to make the Greater Sandpoint Area more attractive to potential businesses looking to relocate, thereby providing jobs and strengthening the economy. An economic study conducted by the Headwaters Institute found that Bonner County's rich quality of life contributes to its comparatively strong economic resilience. Emergent light-industrial and technical companies are increasingly choosing to locate in Bonner County.

The extension of this ever-popular lakeside trail will continue to pay dividends in adjacent communities for many years to come through improved health, wellness, and livability. We strongly encourage support of this important community project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Egland Cox", is written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Katie Egland Cox  
Executive Director  
Kaniksu Land Trust



# BONNER COUNTY

Economic Development Corporation

June 14, 2019

Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth St.  
Ponderay, ID 83852

**RE:** City of Ponderay BUILD Application

Dear Mayor,

This letter is written in support of the BUILD Planning Grant for the City of Ponderay for the construction of a railroad underpass that will connect the Cities of Ponderay and Kootenai the Lake Pend Oreille shoreline and the trail that leads to downtown Sandpoint.

The creation of trails and recreation opportunities in Bonner County is very important to continuing our economic growth. Businesses are not only looking for solid infrastructure, transportation, and labor but are also looking for a healthy and vibrant environment. Completing the Ponderay Bay Trail, which requires a railroad underpass will improve access, and safety and make access to the lakefront property a legal right-of-way.

The Ponderay Bay Trail is a valuable community asset for the Cities of Ponderay, Kootenai and Sandpoint and the current lack of underpass restricts use and access.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Paull". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric Paull  
*Chairman*, Bonner County Economic Development Corporation



**PANHANDLE AREA COUNCIL, INC**

11100 N Airport Drive  
Hayden, ID 83835-9798  
(208) 772-0584  
(208) 620-2313 FAX  
[www.pacni.org](http://www.pacni.org)

June 19, 2019

Mayor Steve Geiger  
City of Ponderay  
288 Fourth Street  
Ponderay, ID 83852

RE: City of Ponderay Lakeshore Connection Project

Dear Mayor Geiger:

Please accept this letter of support to the City of Ponderay for your BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant application. The addition of a safe and legal shared use pathway system connecting the City to the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail and lakeshore will improve livability, tourism, and ultimately the economy of the City and Bonner County.

As the designated U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA Economic Development District for Idaho Region I, the Panhandle Area Council supports the enhancement and protection of assets like the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail because of the economic benefits they create. Communities that have safe, quality attractions can look forward to benefits such as increased property values, growth in tourism, and new or relocating businesses. The City of Ponderay will continue to see economic success in the future with continued investment in projects that increase tourism and enrich the lives of the community.

We look forward to working with the City of Ponderay and the Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail on this project.

Sincerely,

L. Wally Jacobson  
Executive Director