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July 31, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

BNSF Railway supports efforts by the City of Ponderay, Idaho to secure federal funding from the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program. If awarded, the grant would fund the design, engineering, and environmental planning needed for the construction of a new railroad underpass that would improve safety by reducing or eliminating unsanctioned trespassing in the area. According to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), more than 1,000 pedestrian rail trespass casualties (fatalities and injuries) occurred in 2018. Once constructed, the new railroad underpass will provide local residents with legal and safe access to the shoreline of Lake Pend Oreille and the existing regional Pend Oreille Bay Trail.

While we support the goals of the project and own the railroad right-of-way at the proposed project location, Montana Rail Link (MRL) will need to review and approve the final design and agreements for the proposed project since they are the primary operator of this rail corridor.

Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul A. Cristina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul A. Cristina
Director, Public Private Partnerships