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The Honorable Raymond H. LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Mercer Corridor Project TIGER grant application

Dear Secretary LaHood:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARTY BLUEWATER
Shawnee/Choctaw

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I am writing on behalf of United Indians of All Tribes to pledge the agency's support for federal transportation funds being utilized for City of Seattle projects.

United Indians is a Seattle-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency that provides critical services to the region's most vulnerable populations. Seattle's American Indian/Alaska Native population faces an unemployment rate nearly triple that of the general population. As advocates for this community, United Indians is acutely aware of the need for job creation and can readily see how endeavors such as the Mercer Corridor Transportation Project will help resolve city-wide traffic issues simultaneous with creating over 1,300 jobs.

The other critical need is that the improvements on Mercer Avenue will alleviate substantial traffic stress on Valley Street, the street adjacent to Lake Union Park. United Indians is in the process of developing the N.W. Native Canoe Center as part of this major new park development. The street improvements will be an enhancement to the visitor experience—therefore increasing the desirability of the park as a tourist destination.

It is my understanding that the Mercer Corridor Transportation Project is just one of the many projects under consideration for federal transportation. As the State of Washington is the most trade-dependent state in the nation, and Seattle is its largest economic contributor, money must be committed to improving transportation for the people, goods and services within the city, as well as bolstering the economy that is the heartbeat of the Washington State.

It would be a detriment to our community should this investment not be made. Seattle cannot be overlooked! I urge you to support funding for Mercer Corridor improvements and other shovel ready projects in Seattle.

Sincerely,

Marty Bluewater
Executive Director

cc: Senator Patty Murray
Representative Jim McDermott
Mayor Greg Nickels

Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Christine Gregoire
Council President Richard Conlin