

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

We are writing in support of the BUILD Grant application from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to make needed improvements to Interstate 17 (I-17).

As you may be aware, I-17 is an important north/south commercial and recreational route that connects the nationally important I-40 and I-10 trade corridors. It is also the main highway that joins the population and commercial centers of Arizona, as well as its international ports of entry, with the American Midwest. Unfortunately, as a four lane facility, I-17 lacks the capacity to meet the commercial and recreational demands placed upon it and, due to its terrain, even minor accidents in certain sections can close the interstate for hours at a time. The only viable detour during such events is in excess of 160 miles.

ADOT is proposing to address key deficiencies in the present highway by adding an additional general purpose lane to select north and southbound segments as well as an innovative set of "flex lanes" located in the challenging terrain between Black Canyon City and Sunset Point, an area of regular and systemic congestion. The addition of the flex lanes, which can carry traffic in either north or southbound directions depending upon demand, would provide up to four lanes in the peak travel direction on weekends and holidays thus responding to the tremendous recreational traffic demand currently placed upon the roadway and reducing the significant congestion and delay seen today. During the week and on Saturdays, the flex lanes would operate as additional climbing lanes for northbound traffic. The additional lanes would also, for the first time, allow ADOT to re-route traffic around an accident and provide first responders with access to incidents that does not exist today.

The inability of I-17 to meet the demands placed upon it reduces the economic potential of our entire state and improvements, such as proposed by ADOT, are supported by a wide range of interests throughout Arizona. We also support ADOT's efforts to increase the safety, reliability and capacity of I-17 and hope that you will give their BUILD application your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress



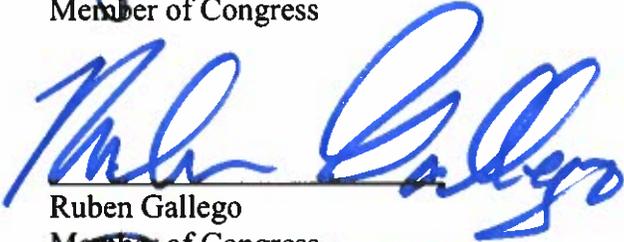
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



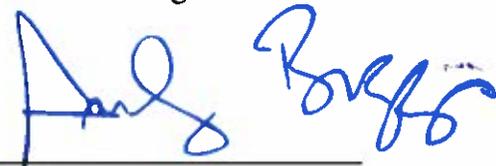
Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



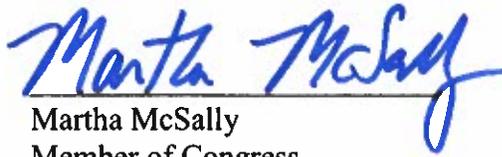
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



Martha McSally
Member of Congress