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January 13, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Thank you for your leadership overseeing the Department of Transportation (DOT). As you implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; P.L. 117-58), I write to highlight the severe needs within my own district for infrastructure improvements due to historic underinvestment in the region.

In my home, California's Central Valley, our way of life is dictated by last generation's infrastructure investments. The success of good infrastructure is apparent, in part, during our farmers' growing season, when water piped from the Sierra Nevada's snowpack grows a quarter of our nation's food and forty percent of our nation's fruits and nuts. On the other hand, infrastructure failures can be seen any weekday with up to a four-hour round-trip commute to and from the Bay Area. These commutes cost folks time they could spend home with their families, they increase road congestion and air pollution, and they continue to wear down our already dilapidated roads. Working on these sorts of issues is precisely what my community sent me to Congress to do.

Unfortunately, decade after decade, we've watched our Valley get passed over while billions flowed into the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Over the last 12 years, the Bay Area has received almost double the federal funding from [competitive DOT grants](#) as the Central Valley. That must change. As the IIJA is implemented and your agency does the work of advancing safety, fighting climate change, boosting job creation, and correcting for environmental injustices—the Central Valley cannot be left behind.

I urge you to consider two worthy projects in the Valley included in the House-passed INVEST in America Act—the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and State Route 132 West Projects. Located in Modesto, the 7th Street Bridge is one of the most dangerous and poorly rated bridges in California and splits the city along the Tuolumne River. Until this bridge is fixed, the majority-Latino community of South Modesto will continue to lack a convenient and safe route for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles to the rest of the city. At present, the bridge has a bridge sufficiency rating of 5.1 out of 100 and is designated so unsafe that our local school buses are forbidden from using it. For this reason, the bridge would be an excellent candidate for the newly created Bridge Improvement Program.

The second is the State Route 132 West Project, which would make much needed safety and connectivity improvements to one of the busiest roadways in Stanislaus County. As we work to build our communities back better, this project would be a strong candidate for several of the competitive grant funding opportunities supported in the IIJA—including the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) and Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grants. This project will redirect the high-traffic State Route 132 West away from schools, churches, businesses, and residences and create a safer environment for pedestrians and bikes. In addition to the numerous safety

benefits, the traffic alleviation from this change will generate \$500 million in travel time savings and \$16 million in emission reductions over the next 30 years.

There is no shortage of worthy projects throughout the Central Valley that would deliver on your goals of climate change action, safety, job creation, and environmental justice. Thank you for your attention to this letter and I look forward to partnering with you throughout the IJJA's implementation to deliver for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Harder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Josh" and "Harder" being capitalized and prominent.

Josh Harder  
Member of Congress