



Washington State Senate

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March 9, 2021

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

Subject: Support for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA Grant: Wenatchee, Washington

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the citizens and businesses of the Wenatchee Valley in Washington State, I urge your support for the City of Wenatchee's application for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant. As the State Senator representing the Wenatchee Valley in Olympia, I wholeheartedly believe that this grant will significantly advance our regional economic opportunities for decades to come.

The Wenatchee Valley is located in North Central Washington State, a rural area comprised of about 87% government-owned land. Located 150 miles east of Seattle in Central Washington, it is at the crossroads of highways going east to Spokane, west to Seattle, north to British Columbia, and south to Yakima and the Tri-Cities. The City of Wenatchee serves as a key transportation hub even though it is 40 miles from the nearest interstate. The Wenatchee Valley is home to the regional commercial airport, Pangborn Memorial Airport, and is a major crew change and switching station for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe mainline that connects Chicago with the Northwest Ports.

The Apple Capital Loop project is the result of years of planning by regional jurisdictions and broad community engagement in across the region. One key challenge the Wenatchee Valley faces is limited property for economic development. The five project segments included in the Apple Capital Loop project will improve safety, mobility, system reliability, freight mobility and congestion relief for the citizens and businesses of Central Washington. Once completed, it will also allow much needed investments in housing, retail, and industrial development by bringing infrastructure to vacant and fire- damaged lands throughout our community.

Recent fire events, both in Washington State and nationally, underscore the importance of implementing the safety elements included in this project. The Wenatchee Valley, surrounded by publicly-owned forestlands, experienced extreme wildfires in 2014 and 2015. In 2015, the Sleepy Hollow Fire jumped into the core of the City of Wenatchee where it burned more than 30 acres. At present, there is only one way in and out of the north end of the city which presents a serious safety hazard during evacuation efforts. The Apple Capital Loop will enhance our ability to respond to future emergencies and safely evacuate citizens, particularly through the Confluence Parkway bypass segment.

The Apple Capital Loop project will create significant new opportunities for continued economic growth by opening access to develop properties and potentially bring investments of over \$500 million to our region. We may be rural in location, but our industries, innovations and products touch the nation and world.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. This INFRA Grant will significantly advance the health, safety and economic welfare of this community for decades to come. Because we are a rural community, we don't have the benefit of an interstate highway. Completion of the Apple Capital Loop project will provide opportunities to highlight the ability of a region to come together and use federal, state and local funding in an efficient and effective manner. I strongly urge your support.

Sincerely,

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

Brad Hawkins
State Senator