

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 18, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write in support of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) application to the Fiscal Year 2023 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program (MPDG) to fund the I-64 OpportUNITY Connector project. This project will develop a critical link between two major regions, the Richmond metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and the Hampton Roads MSA.

A MPDG grant will fund much-needed improvements to a 29-mile corridor on I-64 that will fully connect Richmond and Hampton Roads. While VDOT has demonstrated a commitment to linking these regions together with nearly 10 years of I-64 road and infrastructure investments totaling \$5.3 billion, a 29-mile stretch of two lanes in each direction known as the I-64 gap remains a major chokepoint that is notorious for congestion issues.

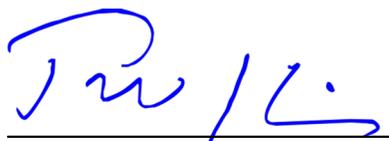
The corridor is a critical link between Richmond and Hampton Roads. Combined, these two areas comprise the 17th largest economic region in the United States. Addressing the I-64 gap will expand the capacity for the flow of goods and services, ensure safety, augment national security, expand broadband connectivity, enhance commuter mobility, and provide resiliency from extreme weather and climate conditions.

This project serves the interest of national security, as I-64 serves as the primary evacuation route for Hampton Roads and northeastern North Carolina during hurricanes or other disasters. The region encompasses a large and diverse concentration of military installations, with Department of Defense installations accounting for 40 percent of the region's gross regional product. The region is home to 19 military installations, four branches of the military services and the Coast Guard, approximately 125,000 active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel, and over 135,000 military dependents.

The I-64 OpportUNITY Connector will provide generational benefits to the economic health, well-being, and safety of citizens, while providing support for the large concentration of military personnel and facilities in this region. VDOT is fully committed to this project and ready to apply expertise and plans already in place to efficiently implement this critical initiative.

We ask that you give this proposal every appropriate consideration.

Sincerely,



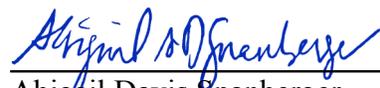
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress