



Hon. Víctor M. Emeric Catarineau
Alcalde

April 14, 2014

Mr. Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Puerto Rico Eastern Region Multimodal Transportation Plan: Connecting People to Jobs and Services - TIGER Grant Request, San Juan, PR

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Municipality of Vieques supports the application of the Puerto Rico Eastern Region Multimodal Transportation Plan: Connecting People to Jobs and Services, for TIGER funding in support of the development of a regional, multimodal transportation plan between the eastern municipalities of Ceiba and Naguabo and in particular the islands of Vieques and Culebra. The project is an integral element of the efforts to promote economic activities that improve the disadvantaged economic situation of the residents of the Eastern region, specifically residents of the island of Vieques, who are facing high poverty and unemployment levels.

For decades, Puerto Rico has exhibited one of the worst poverty and unemployment levels of all jurisdictions within the United States. Within Puerto Rico, the eastern municipality of the island of Vieques has consistently reflected even worse indicators. It is fair to say that Vieques and parts of eastern Puerto Rico are among the USA's poorest and most economically distressed regions. They have experienced an economic and land use transformation from being military facilities to potential tourism destinations. However, transportation inefficiencies have affected their competitiveness, impacting the movement of residents, freight, including goods necessary for daily and economic activities, as well as visitors and tourists.

The proposed planning project subject of this grant application aims to develop a regional, multimodal transportation plan between Roosevelt Roads and Vieques-Culebra in order to (i) diversify the opportunities for mobility of residents, visitors and cargo (via a new maritime route) between Vieques, Culebra and the rest of Puerto Rico; (ii) repair and enhance Roosevelt Roads' surface connections with neighboring urban centers of Ceiba and Naguabo; (iii) enhance

multimodal connections in Vieques and Culebra and between these island-municipalities and the East of Puerto Rico for residents and visitors; and (iv) connect Vieques and Culebra residents to the economic activities planned for Roosevelt Roads in order to foster their economic mobility.

With that in mind, the transportation elements identified in the project's scope of work are consistent with and advance the mission of TIGER funding. As Mayor of Vieques, we are truly excited about this opportunity to accelerate economic recovery and the creation of this new thrust in Puerto Rico's Eastern Region's economic development, specifically in Vieques.

I urge you to give every possible consideration to this important initiative. Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Cordially,



Victor M. Emeric Catarineau
Mayor