

**Appendix H: Letters of Support**  
**Morning Drive Grade Separation Project**  
**Federal Railroad Administration**  
**Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements**

**Elected Representatives**

| Last Name | First Name | Title                 | Entity                        |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| McCarthy  | Kevin      | House Majority Leader | Congress of the United States |
| Cox       | TJ         | Member, 21st District | Congress of the United States |
| Salas     | Rudy       | Member, 32nd District | California State Assembly     |
| Fong      | Vince      | Member, 34th District | California State Assembly     |

**Business**

|           |         |                     |   |
|-----------|---------|---------------------|---|
| Spaulding | John    | Executive Secretary | Building Trades Council of Kern, Inyo & Mono Counties |
| Huckaby   | Jeff    | President and CEO   | Grimmway Farms  |
| Chapman   | Richard | President and CEO   | Kern Economic Development Corporation                 |

**Public Agency**

| Last Name | First Name | Title                   | Entity  |
|-----------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| Kelly     | Brian      | Chief Executive Officer | California High Speed Rail Authority            |
| Noyola    | Alfonso    | City Manager            | City of Arvin                                   |
| Smith     | Mark J.    | President               | Greater Bakersfield Separaton of Grade District |
| Smith     | Bob        | Chairman                | Kern Council of Governments Governing Board     |
| Hakimi    | Ahron      | Executive Director      | Kern Council of Governments                     |

**Community Groups**

| Last Name | First Name | Title           | Entity            |
|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Chandy    | Asha       | Program Manager | Bike Bakersfield  |
| Williams  | Bill       | President       | Project Clean Air |

TJ COX

21ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON DC OFFICE  
1728 LONGWORTH OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4695

SELMA OFFICE  
2117 SELMA STREET  
SELMA, CA 93662

BAKERSFIELD OFFICE  
2700 M STREET, SUITE 250 B  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301  
(661) 864-7736



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES

CHAIRMAN OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER,  
OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
LIVESTOCK AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY,  
HORTICULTURE AND RESEARCH

October 18, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write in support of Kern County's application for funding through the 2019 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant program, managed by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Kern County has requested \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) and rail lines owned by Union Pacific Railroad. The rail crossing averages 40-50 trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection with more-than-100-car trains. Vehicles back up and idle for up to half a mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. Elimination of the this at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

This Project is identified in the 2019-20 California Public Utilities Grade Separation Priority List and ranks first for grade separation projects in the Kern Council of Governments 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. It supports the DOT's National Goals and Performance Management Measures including safety improvements, enhanced infrastructure conditions, congestion reduction, improved system reliability, freight movement, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays. The project is also critical to improving fluid freight movement both regionally and nationally.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that you give the County of Kern's CRISI application your full consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me or my District Director, Gilbert Felix, at 559-460-6070.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "TJ Cox".

TJ Cox  
Member of Congress

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0034  
(916) 319-2034  
FAX (916) 319-2134

DISTRICT OFFICE  
4550 CALIFORNIA AVENUE, SUITE 740  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309  
(661) 395-2995  
FAX (661) 395-3883

EMAIL  
Assemblymember.Fong@assembly.ca.gov

October 17, 2019

# Assembly California Legislature



VINCE FONG

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, THIRTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIR: TRANSPORTATION  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET  
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS  
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND  
RETIREMENT

SUBCOMMITTEES  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 3 ON  
RESOURCES AND TRANSPORTATION  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 6 ON  
BUDGET PROCESS OVERSIGHT AND  
PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590

Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)  
Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.

Dear Secretary Chao,

I wholeheartedly support the County of Kern's (County's) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad. The project is intended to meet the National Goals and Performance Management Measures spelled out in U.S.C. 23 § 150 including safety improvements, enhanced infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, improved system reliability, freight movements and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The railway is a shared double track facility that averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection with more-than-100-car trains. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approx. ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

The Project is critical to improving fluid freight movement both regionally and nationally. Network reliability is crucial due to Kern County being a major hub for logistic distribution centers that process shipping containers to and from the Ports of Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach, accounting for 60% of the US import/export. Elimination of the at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

CRISI Funding will advance this project from the planning and environmental phase to the design and construction phases. The Project is identified in the 2019-20 California Public Utilities Grade Separation Priority List. The Project ranks first for grade separation projects in the Kern Council of Governments 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. Local and State funds will be leveraged to complete the Project.

I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (661) 395-2995. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vince Fong".

Vince Fong  
34th Assembly District, California



# Building Trades Council

## Kern, Inyo, & Mono Counties of California AFL-CIO

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties of the Building and Construction Trades Council, I wholeheartedly support the County of Kern's (County's) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The section of the railway averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approx. ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

These delays are not only significant in the loss of time and money, but the region as a whole is paying a much heftier price in health impacts. The San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Kern air basins are currently in extreme and serious non-attainment respectively for the 8-hour ozone standard. Particulate Matter 2.5 and 10.0 levels in the valley exceed both state and federal clean air guidelines. These pollutants have been linked to premature death, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, lost workdays, school absences, and reduced activity, all of which translates into increased health costs. Reducing emissions from diesel locomotives will have an immediate and lasting impact on local air quality.

The Project is critical to improving fluid freight movement both regionally and nationally. Network reliability is crucial to supporting Kern County as a major hub for logistic distribution centers that process shipping containers to and from the Ports of Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach, accounting for 60% of the US import/export. Elimination of the this at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Regards,

John Spaulding  
Executive Secretary





A family of *Growing* companies.

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of Grimmway Farms, I'd to share our company's support for the County of Kern's application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The section of the railway averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approx. ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

The Project is critical to improving fluid freight movement both regionally and nationally. Network reliability is crucial to supporting Kern County as a major hub for logistic distribution centers that process shipping containers to and from the Ports of Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach, accounting for 60% of the US import/export. Elimination of this at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

We are happy to support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Regards,

Jeff Huckaby  
President, Grimmway Farms

P.O. 81498 Bakersfield, CA 93380-1498  
tel: (661) 854-6205 fax: (661) 854-6209  
[www.grimmway.com](http://www.grimmway.com)



October 17, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Kern Economic Development Corporation (Kern EDC), I respectfully submit this letter of support for the County of Kern's (County's) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad.

Kern EDC represents a coalition of business and government leaders dedicated to ensuring a diverse and strong economic climate for Kern County. We accomplish this through the recruitment of new business opportunities and assisting in the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

The Project is critical to improving freight movement both regionally and nationally. Network reliability is crucial to supporting Kern County as a major hub for over 50 distribution centers that process shipping containers to and from the Ports of Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach, accounting for 60% of the nation's import/export activity. Elimination of the at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

Kern EDC supports the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion, and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this highly important matter.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Chapman

President & CEO

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A Public-Private Partnership Helping Kern County Businesses Thrive Since 1988

2700 M Street, Suite 200 · Bakersfield, CA 93301 · Phone (661) 862-5150 · Fax (661) 862-5151 · [www.kedc.com](http://www.kedc.com)



October 18, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS

Lenny Mendonca  
CHAIR

Thomas Richards  
VICE CHAIR

Ernest M. Camacho

Daniel Curtln

Bonnie Lowenthal

Nancy Miller

Henry R. Perea, Sr.

Lynn Schenk

EX OFFICIO  
BOARD MEMBERS

Honorable  
Dr. Joaquin Arambula

Honorable Jim Beall

Brian P. Kelly  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

GAVIN NEWSOM  
GOVERNOR



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

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern’s Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write in strong support for the County of Kern’s (County’s) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy freight train traffic.

The local community is in strong support of this project as vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approx. ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay. The safety risks at this location have been acknowledged at the State-level, as the project is identified in the 2019-20 California Public Utilities Grade Separation Priority List. This project will improve freight movement both regionally and nationally. Elimination of the this at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

The High-Speed Rail system in construction in the Central Valley of California now will result in 36 new grade separated crossings – so I am familiar with the safety and other benefits of rail grade separation projects. The Morning Drive Grade Separation Project is not part of the High-Speed Rail Project; however, the Authority is happy to support the County in its efforts to improve safety, reduce congestion and grow the Kern County economy.



# CITY OF ARVIN

October 10, 2019

**MAYOR**

Jose Gurrola

**MAYOR PRO TEM**

Jazmin Robles

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Gabriela Martinez

Olivia Trujillo

Mark Franetovich

**CITY MANAGER**

Jerry Breckinridge

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao,

I wholeheartedly support the County of Kern's (County's) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The section of the railway averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approximately ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

These delays are not only significant in the loss of time and money, but the region as a whole is paying a much heftier price in health impacts. The San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Kern air basins are currently in extreme and serious non-attainment respectively for the 8-hour ozone standard. Particulate Matter 2.5 and 10.0 levels in the valley exceed both state and federal clean air guidelines. These pollutants have been linked to premature death, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, lost workdays, school absences, and reduced activity, all of which translates into increased health costs. Reducing emissions from diesel locomotives will have an immediate and lasting impact on local air quality.

The Project is critical to improving fluid freight movement both regionally and nationally. Network reliability is crucial to supporting Kern County as a major hub for logistic distribution centers that process shipping containers to and from the Ports of Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach, accounting for 60% of the US import/export. Elimination of this at-grade crossing would extend this corridor to 5.6 miles of uninterrupted service that is no longer at risk of vehicle or pedestrian collisions or product delays.

I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Phone (661) 854-3134  
Fax (661) 854-0817

200 Campus Drive  
P.O. Box 548  
Arvin, California 93203

Regards,

  
Jerry Breckinridge  
City Manager



*Greater Bakersfield Separation of Grade District  
1800 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 260  
Bakersfield, CA 93301*

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Greater Bakersfield Separation of Grade District I wholeheartedly support the County of Kern's application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The section of the railway averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approximately a half mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

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I support Kern County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Regards,



Mark J. Smith  
President, Greater Bakersfield Separation of Grade District



**Kern Council  
of Governments**

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

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I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bob Smith'.

Bob Smith  
Governing Board Chairman

Copy: Ronald Batory, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration

**Kern Council of Governments**

1401 19th Street, Suite 300, Bakersfield, California 93301 (661) 635-2900 Facsimile (661) 324-8215 TTY (661) 832-7433 www.kerncog.org



**Kern Council  
of Governments**

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

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I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ahron Hakimi".

Ahron Hakimi  
Executive Director

Copy: Ronald Batory, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration

**Kern Council of Governments**

1401 19th Street, Suite 300, Bakersfield, California 93301 (661) 635-2900 Facsimile (661) 324-8215 TTY (661) 832-7433 [www.kerncog.org](http://www.kerncog.org)



**BikeBakersfield.org**  
*Bicycling for Everyday Transportation*

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Support letter for the County of Kern's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program grant application –Morning Drive Grade Separation Project.**

Dear Secretary Chao,

I wholeheartedly support the County of Kern's (County's) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad. The Project includes the installation of ADA compliant bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The 2018 Kern Region Active Transportation Plan recommends construction of a Class II Bike Lane along a 4.9 mile section of Morning Drive starting in the Project area and running north to Paladino Drive.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The section of the railway averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approx. ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

These delays are not only significant in the loss of time and money, but the region as a whole is paying a much heftier price in health impacts. The San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Kern air basins are currently in extreme and serious non-attainment respectively for the 8-hour ozone standard. Particulate Matter 2.5 and 10.0 levels in the valley exceed both state and federal clean air guidelines. These pollutants have been linked to premature death, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, lost workdays, school absences, and reduced activity, all of which translates into increased health costs. Reducing emissions from diesel locomotives will have an immediate and lasting impact on local air quality.

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I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Regards,

*Asha Chandy*

Asha Chandy, Programs Manager  
Bike Bakersfield  
Asha@bikebakersfield.org





**PROJECT  
CLEAN  
AIR**

October 18, 2019

**Project Clean Air, Inc.**  
Bill Williams, President  
John Clements, Vice President  
Arin Resnick, Treasurer

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary – U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

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Dear Secretary Chao,

I wholeheartedly support the County of Kern's (County's) application for \$40 million to build the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project (Project) to eliminate the conflict between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the current at-grade crossing on Morning Drive (State Route 184) at the Union Pacific Railroad. The Project includes the installation of ADA compliant bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The 2018 Kern Region Active Transportation Plan recommends construction of a Class II Bike Lane along a 4.9 mile section of Morning Drive starting in the Project area.

Established in 1991, Project Clean Air ([projectcleanair.us](http://projectcleanair.us)) is a 501[c]3 organization that strives to enhance the community by improving air quality through education and collective action throughout the San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Kern County. Our agency supports the County of Kern and its team in its effort to assertively seek grant opportunities to fund projects that strengthen the regional transportation system.

Locally, these improvements are needed to improve public health and safety at a heavily congested intersection experiencing high incidences of vehicle collisions and heavy train traffic. The section of the railway averages 40-50 freight trains daily or 4 trains per hour blocking this intersection. Vehicles, school buses and truck trailers back up and idle for approx. ½ mile in each direction waiting for the train to pass. There have been nearly 40 vehicle collisions in this intersection in the last 10 years, many likely due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the train delay.

These delays are not only significant in the loss of time and money, but the region as a whole is paying a much heftier price in health impacts. The San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Kern air basins are currently in extreme and serious non-attainment respectively for the 8-hour ozone standard. Particulate Matter 2.5 and 10.0 levels in the valley exceed both state and federal clean air guidelines. These pollutants have been linked to premature death, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, lost workdays, school absences, and reduced activity, all of which translates into increased health costs. Reducing emissions from diesel locomotives will have an immediate and lasting impact on local air quality.

I support the County's CRISI application as the Morning Drive Grade Separation Project will help improve safety, public health, relieve traffic congestion and allow for faster rail transportation of goods in the region. Your consideration of the application is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bill Williams, President