



April 23, 2014

The Honorable 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:

I am writing to express our support for Puerto Rico's Tiger Grant Request for the Eastern Region Multimodal Transportation Plan. We believe this Plan will boost initiatives currently being undertaken by the Local Redevelopment Authority for Roosevelt Roads (LRA) to create jobs and stimulate economic growth in the towns of Ceiba and Naguabo, and the eastern region of Puerto Rico, including Vieques and Culebra. The closure in 2004 of Naval Station Roosevelt Roads represented the loss of approximately \$300 million to the Island's economy and many good paying jobs in the neighboring towns of Ceiba, Naguabo and Fajardo. The Municipalities of Vieques and Culebra were also severely impacted with the resulting decrease in economic activity. The unemployment rate for this area has increased to unprecedented levels since the base closure.

The proposed 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.

We believe this regional multimodal transportation plan will also benefit people in need of healthcare services as it would significantly improve their access to the hospital facility located in Roosevelt Roads and to other medical professional facilities in the towns of Ceiba, Naguabo and Fajardo. During March 2014, the US Department of Health and Human Services (USHHS) conveyed to the LRA that it would evaluate applications from STAT Medical Group and Caribbean Medical Center by August 1, 2014 for the operation of the hospital at Roosevelt

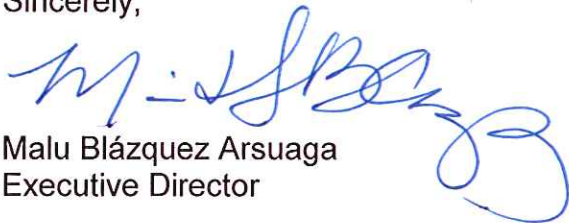
Roads. Both of these organizations are in the process of completing their respective applications for submittal to USHHS by May 15, 2014. It is estimated that total investment to revamp the 100 bedroom hospital will total approximately \$22 million. When fully operational the hospital will create between 150-200 jobs. Therefore, transportation to and from Ceiba, Vieques and Culebra not only will enhance much needed healthcare benefits to its residents, it will also help to expand the market for medical services in the area.

Additionally, the improvements proposed to the transportation infrastructure under this grant will motivate investors and developers to invest in the redevelopment project at Roosevelt Roads. The LRA is preparing to launch a Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals in the summer of 2014 in order to implement the approved LRA Master Plan. Surely this development will incentivize investors and create more favorable market conditions for several enterprises to establish operations and flourish within Roosevelt Roads and immediate towns. Consequently, this Tiger Grant Request Plan will complement our own redevelopment efforts and support an environment that will lead to increase job creation and economic activity in the area.

As Executive Director of the LRA, we are pledging \$50,000 as a matching contribution towards this proposed Tiger Grant Request for the Eastern Region Multimodal Transportation Plan. The Puerto Rico Infrastructure Financing Authority (AFI) will act as project grantee while the LRA will act as partner and co-sponsor in the endeavor. We also want to underscore that AFI will contribute \$60,000 (in-kind) in matching funds and that the Department of Economic Development and Commerce is pledging another \$50,000 to this project, for a total of \$160,000 in matching funds.

The LRA fully endorses this TIGER grant application to drive a robust economic recovery in the area and to significantly improve the standard of living of the people and communities of the eastern region of Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,



Malu Blázquez Arsuaga  
Executive Director