



April 22, 2014

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

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

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company is pleased to support the application of the Puerto Rico Eastern Region Multimodal Transportation Plan: Connecting People to Jobs and Services, for \$800,000.00 in TIGER funding to support 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, 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 municipalities of Ceiba and Naguabo, and in particular the islands of Vieques and Culebra, have consistently reflected even worse indicators. It is fair to say that Vieques, Culebra 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 the former naval base of 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. The total cost of the proposed

regional planning project is \$800,000. The amount of TIGER grant funding requested is \$640,000 (80% of the total cost). The Department of Economic Development and Commerce (DDEC), the Local Redevelopment Authority for Roosevelt Roads (LRA), the Puerto Rico Infrastructure Financing Authority (AFI), and the Office of Management and Budget of Puerto Rico (OGP) are committing \$160,000.00 (20% of the total cost) toward the project. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me directly.

Cordially,



Ingrid I. Rivera-Rocafort  
Executive Director