



ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

February 21, 2012

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
RE: Tiger ID# JasonDavis65818
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Support for Tiger IV Grant Funding for Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District

Dear Mr. La Hood:

I am writing in support of a grant application in the amount of \$9,490,045, to be matched with \$500,000, from the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX), submitted under the provision of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Act, Tiger IV. The NETEX grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project that will rehabilitate 69.6 miles of Rail Line in Franklin, Hopkins, Delta and Hunt Counties, Texas.

Rail freight service is of extreme importance to our region and allows small businesses and individuals affordable transportation means for products shipped and received for use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Currently the line is in poor state of repair with millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that safe, reliable service will continue to be available.

Closure of the NETEX Line for safety reasons is a serious concern if major rehabilitation to the line is deferred, which would be a great detriment to our region.

We urge the Department of Transportation to give serious consideration for funding this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. D. Williamson".

L. D. Williamson
Executive Director

/sgp



Office of the
County Judge



County Courthouse
Post Office Box 288
Sulphur Springs, TX 75483



March 14, 2012

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
ID: Jason Davis65818

Mr. Secretary:

Hopkins County is writing in support of a Tiger 4 grant application on behalf of the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX), in the amount of \$9,490,045 federal funds, with NETEX providing a \$500,000 match, for a total of \$9,990,045. The Project will Rehabilitate 69.6 miles of Rail Line in Franklin, Hopkins, Delta and Hunt Counties, Texas. NETEX is submitting the application under provisions of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER IV." The NETEX district includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin, and Titus Counties, TX. This grant is important to Hopkins County in order to provide services for the needs of shippers and receivers along the NETEX rail line which includes Hopkins County, and will permit NETEX to maintain a vital mode of transportation that businesses and individuals could benefit from in this area. The grant application is a **Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project**, a vital resource for Hopkins County. The NETEX Board of Directors, and Contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line, (STL SW Cotton Belt Route), which would have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, businesses and individuals on the NETEX rail line would face much higher transportation cost for products used in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been sufficient to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's.

Mr. Ray LaHood

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The "Poor State of Repair" of the line, necessitates train operation at 10 mph or less. Rehabilitation would classify the line as a Class 2 rail line, permitting train operation of 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the rail line could face closure, for safety reasons, if rehabilitation is deferred. Long term benefits of the project will provide a safe, reliable, and self-sustaining rural rail line. The project will immediately put people to work in a depressed Rural region where wage levels are below the State and National averages. The \$9,490,045 requested will be a responsible and appropriate use of TIGER 4 federal funds. Hopkins County supports this Application and urges DOT to give serious consideration, and fund this project.

Respectfully,



Chris Brown
Hopkins County Judge

CB/br



February 21, 2012

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
RE: TIGER ID# JasonDavis65818
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Mr. Secretary,

The City of Sulphur Springs is writing in support of a Tiger 4 grant application on behalf of the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX), in the amount of \$9,490,045 federal funds, with NETEX providing a \$500,000 match, for a total of \$9,990,045. The Project will rehabilitate 69.6 miles of Rail Line in Franklin, Hopkins, Delta and Hunt Counties, Texas. NETEX is submitting the application under provisions of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER IV". The NETEX district includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin, and Titus Counties, Texas. The grant is crucial to the City of Sulphur Springs as rehabilitation of the rail line is a vital component of our economic development plan. Increasingly, new and potential business prospects are looking to locate near reliable rail service. Without a rehabilitated rail line, our prospects for recruiting new industry are not nearly as bright.

The grant application is a **Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project**, a fundamental resource for the City of Sulphur Springs. The NETEX Board of Directors, and Contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line, (STL SW Cotton Belt Route), which would have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, businesses and individuals on the NETEX rail line would face much higher transportation cost for products used in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

City of Sulphur Springs

NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been sufficient to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The "Poor State of Repair" of the line, necessitates train operation at 10 mph or less. Rehabilitation would classify the line as a Class 2 rail line, permitting train operation of 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the rail line could face closure, for safety reasons, if rehabilitation is deferred. Long term benefits of the project will provide a safe, reliable, and self-sustaining, Rural rail line. The project will immediately put people to work in a depressed Rural region where wage levels are below the State and National averages. The \$9,490,045 requested will be a responsible and appropriate use of TIGER 4 federal funds. The City of Sulphur Springs supports this Application and urges DOT to give serious consideration, and fund this project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Maxwell", written in a cursive style.

Marc Maxwell
City Manager



February 21, 2012

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
RE: TIGER ID# JasonDavis65818
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. La Hood:

The Commerce Economic Development Corporation is writing in support of a TIGER 4 Grant Application on behalf of the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX), for the amount of \$9,490,045 in federal funds, with NETEX providing a match of \$500,000, for a total of \$9,990,045. This project will rehabilitate 69.6 miles of Rail Line in Franklin, Hopkins, Delta and Hunt Counties, Texas. NETEX is submitting the application under provisions of the **TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER IV."** The NETEX district includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties, Texas. This Grant is important to the Commerce EDC and our local economy, as rail service plays a significant role for the industries in Commerce.

The grant application is a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, a vital resource for the Commerce EDC. The NETEX Board of Directors and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch Line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route), which would have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, businesses and individuals along the NETEX rail line would face much higher transportation costs for products used in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been sufficient to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The "poor state of repair" of the line, necessitates train operation at 10 mph or less. Rehabilitation would classify the line as a Class 2 Rail Line, permitting train operation of 25 mph. For safety reasons, NETEX is seriously concerned that the rail line could face closure if rehabilitation is deferred. Long term benefits of the project will provide a safe, reliable and self-sustaining *rural rail line*. This project would immediately

Commerce Economic Development Corporation
1119 Alamo Street, Commerce, Texas 75428
(903) 886-1121 - Fax: (903) 886-8929
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e-mail: bonnie.hunter@commercetx.org

put people to work in a depressed rural region, where wage levels are below the state and national averages. The \$9,490,045 requested will be a responsible and appropriate use of TIGER 4 Federal Funds. The Commerce Economic Development Corporation supports this application and urges the Department of Transportation to give this project serious consideration for funding.

Sincerely,

Commerce Economic Development Corporation



Bonnie Hunter
Executive Director



February 23, 2012

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
RE: TIGER ID# JasonDavis65818
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. La Hood;

As president of Texas A&M University-Commerce (A&M-Commerce), I am writing to support a grant application for \$9,490,045 to be submitted by the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) under the provision of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, "TIGER Discretionary Grants" program. The funding of this grant proposal is of extreme importance to Texas A&M University-Commerce. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes Franklin, Hopkins, Delta, Hunt, Collin, and Titus Counties, and the grant application is specifically for a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project. The funding of this grant proposal is very important to A&M-Commerce since it would affect a vital infrastructure resource in the university's service area.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the former C-Branch line of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway (Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation costs for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail Line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

I understand that NETEX and BLR have increased carloads by 493% between 1999 and 2011. Despite this tremendous growth, revenue generated cannot compensate for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the Line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The current condition of the Rail Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph; however, this project would bring the Line up to Class 2 standards and permit train operation up to 25 mph. If major rehabilitation is further deferred, NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons. This project will provide long-term benefits of a safe, reliable, and self-sustaining rural rail line and will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the state and national averages.

On behalf of all members of the university community, I support this application and urge the Department of Transportation to give serious consideration and fund this "fast-track" project.

Sincerely,

Dan R. Jones, Ph.D.
President

Office of the President

P.O. Box 3011 • Commerce, TX 75429-3011 • Phone: 903.886.5014 • Fax: 903.886.5010 • www.tamu-commerce.edu