INTERcity TRANSIT

May 24, 2011

Mr. Victor M. Mendez, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Reference: Joint Base Lewis McChord /I-5 Congestion Relief Action Plan

Dear Mr. Mendez,

Intercity Transit is pleased to support the interagency efforts and proposal by our regional MPO, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, to develop a JBLM / I-5 Congestion Relief Action Plan.

Submitted on behalf of the region's transportation partners, the Plan's efforts to improve travel time reliability for public transit's fixed route service and commuter vanpools, as well as other high occupancy travel modes along Interstate 5 (I-5) to Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) cannot be underestimated. The importance of this effort will help leverage current and future investments Intercity Transit is making in inter-county Express transit service, commuter vanpools, regional on-line Trip Planner and ridematching web based services. This also includes existing inter-county connections Intercity Transit has with other regional service providers including Pierce Transit and Sound Transit, which offer services to the larger metropolitan areas of the Central Puget Sound region.

Intercity Transit has been an active participant in several planning studies leading up to this proposed Action Plan. While we appreciate the need for significant investments to expand existing infrastructure and increase multi-modal carrying capacity for the Interstate, those strategies are expensive and will take years to execute. Meanwhile, growing congestion associated with recent and significant influx of military assignments to the JBLM has now made it difficult for Express service buses to maintain schedules and make critical connections to transportation services including regional commuter rail and transit service.

Current traffic congestion conditions along the I-5 corridor, leading to and along the Interstate past JBLM, has evolved into a disincentive to use transit. This is happening at the very time that increasing fuel prices should be making transit a more competitive alternative to driving alone. We believe the proposed Action Plan can help alleviate the growing congestion pressures and provide measurable benefits very quickly. Measures that can be deployed within existing resources or implemented at a low cost. These benefits will not only make transit a more reliable alternative to driving a single occupant vehicle and reducing vehicle miles traveled but will improve system efficiency for all interstate users.

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I encourage you to consider the significant benefits being proposed by the JBLM / I-5 Congestion Relief Action Plan. And to support TRPC's regional effort by funding the proposal from the *Transportation, Community and Systems Preservation* program.

Thank you for your consideration. If you or your staff have any questions please, feel free to contact me directly at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Rhoderta Seward

for: Mike Harbour
General Manager