

June 6, 2023

Mr. J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.  
Chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission  
Texas Department of Transportation  
125 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

RE: 2024 Unified Transportation Program and the Ports-to-Plains Corridor

Dear Chairman Bugg and Commissioners,

As Texas legislators representing districts along the Ports-to-Plains Future Interstate-27 (I-27), we want to start by thanking the Texas Transportation Commission (Commission) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for identifying U.S. 87 from the Texas/New Mexico state line to San Angelo and U.S. 87/U.S. 277 from I-10 at Sonora to Laredo as Key Statewide and Rural Connectivity Corridors. These designations are an essential step for the communities that we represent.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is vitally important to international trade for the agriculture and energy sectors across the state, and the benefits are significant. This corridor connects the strategic trade gateways of Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio to destinations north, west, and east. Additionally, this corridor supports over \$11 billion a year in agriculture production. Along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, 12 of the nation's top 20 cattle feedlots are served by this transportation artery. Trade with Mexico will double in the next thirty years, and agricultural commodities such as beef and feedstock will be significant. Three of the nation's top six agricultural exports in 2022 (cattle, cotton, and dairy) are directly connected to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Trade through Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio totaled \$25.1 billion in 1994. Today trade has grown to \$261.6 billion and is projected to be more than \$676 billion in 2050.

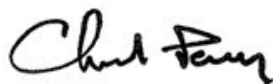
Another unique feature of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is that two of the nation's largest oil fields anchor both ends of the corridor, the Permian Basin in Texas and the Bakken in North Dakota. The Permian Basin accounts for over 39% of the U.S. crude oil production, and in 2019 it generated

\$9 billion of the state's oil and gas severance tax. In 2016, the Eagle Ford Shale contributed \$3.1 billion to the state and local economy. Since fiscal year 2015, oil and gas severance taxes have contributed through Proposition 1, \$13.3 billion in deposits to the State Highway Fund, and are expected to reach \$5.4 billion by fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

We support the Commission and TxDOT making planning funds a priority for this Future Interstate Highway and these Key Statewide and Rural Connectivity Corridors. The benefits of the Future Interstate Highway are only realized when it is constructed segment by segment. In preparation for drafting the 2024 Unified Transportation Program, we encourage the Commission and TxDOT to provide planning authority for segments along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

We look forward to continue working with the Commission and TxDOT to prioritize planning funds for the development of the Ports-to-Plains Future I-27.

Respectfully,



Sen. Charles Perry  
Senate District 28



Sen. Roland Gutierrez  
Senate District 19



Sen. Judith Zaffirini  
Senate District 21



Sen. Pete Flores  
Senate District 24



Sen. Kevin Sparks  
Senate District 31



Rep. Ryan Guillen  
House District 31



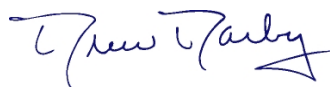
Rep. Richard Pena Raymond  
House District 42



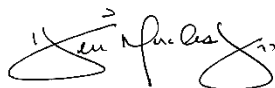
Rep. Andrew S. Murr  
House District 53



Rep. Stan Lambert  
House District 71



Rep. Drew Darby  
House District 72



Rep. Eddie Morales  
House District 74



Rep. Tracy O. King  
House District 80



Rep. Brooks Landgraf  
House District 81



Rep. Dustin Burrows  
House District 83



Rep. Carl H. Tepper  
House District 84



Rep. John T. Smithee  
House District 86



Rep. Four Price  
House District 87



Rep. Ken King  
House District 88