

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0309

February 2, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We write regarding the Arizona Department of Transportation's application for the 2022 National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) grant program to expand the Interstate 10 (I-10) Wild Horse Pass Corridor between Casa Grande and Chandler, south of Phoenix. We are disappointed that this critical project was not one of the initial projects selected for Mega grant funding, and respectfully request a staff briefing from the Department of Transportation to understand how funding determinations were made, and opportunities for the state to improve its application in future years.

I-10 is designated as a Key Commerce Corridor, with significant freight, commuter, and recreational traffic traveling through this region. The Wild Horse Pass Corridor currently experiences heavy congestion and repeated crashes that result in lengthy delays and closures, especially during dust storms in the summer months. These 26 miles constitute the last remaining segment of I-10 between Phoenix and Tucson that only has two lanes in each direction, which causes a daily bottleneck. The remainder of the road has at least three lanes in each direction. Arizonans use this route to commute into Phoenix on a daily basis from rural communities, and many residents of these communities use this route to access critical services that are only provided in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Wild Horse Pass Corridor serves the Gila River Indian Community by providing key connections to employment, medical, educational, and other necessary services both within and outside of the community.

I-10 is also a major transportation route for freight traffic through the southern portion of the U.S. and provides a principal link for freight traffic from the ports of southern California and for international commerce to and from Mexico and Central America through Arizona.

The state of Arizona and local partners have demonstrated a commitment to this project. In May 2022, the state Legislature appropriated \$400 million in state funds for the project, on top of the \$110 million already committed for widening the Gila River Bridge. Additionally, the Maricopa Association of Governments contributed \$220 million for the portion of the Wild Horse Corridor in Maricopa County, and the Gila River Indian Community contributed \$50 million.

Given the significant impacts of this heavily trafficked corridor for interstate and international trade and commerce, and the opportunities to improve highway safety, we are disappointed that the U.S. Department of Transportation did not award a Mega grant for the project.

We request a meeting with DOT staff to understand what led to an unsuccessful grant application, and ask that you direct our staff to other appropriate funding opportunities the U.S. Department of Transportation has so we can work with our state partners to ensure completion of this project critical to local residents, neighboring states, and international commerce.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to addressing the safety, reliability, and capacity of the I-10 Wild Horse Pass Corridor so that Arizona residents, tourists, and commerce can have access to dependable infrastructure.

Sincerely,

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Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Kelly
United States Senator