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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
52nd District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS AND MONETARY POLICY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
ILLICIT FINANCE, AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the “San Ysidro Transit Center Improvements” project in fiscal year 2025, in the amount of \$3,600,000. The entity to receive the funding is the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), located at 401 B, San Diego, CA 92101.

The San Ysidro Port of Entry is the primary gateway between the U.S. and Mexico and one of the busiest border crossings in the world. Today, over 90,000 people cross northbound through this port daily resulting in a dynamic binational culture, workforce, and economy. Nearly 20,000 of these daily crossers do so as pedestrians landing immediately at the San Ysidro Transit Center (SYTC). For decades this station has been an anchor connecting community residents, regional travelers, and the cross-border population to the rest of the region. Today, the Blue Line Trolley has some of the highest ridership of any light rail line in the country with 13,000 daily riders boarding at SYTC alone. Despite its workload and importance to the region, state, and country, the station faces significant challenges impacting safety, connectivity, and efficiency. These issues have persisted for more than 20 years since the site was last reconfigured.

With nearly 50,000 vehicles queueing for several hours to cross each day, the resulting poor air quality impacts San Ysidro community residents the most. Limited capacity at SYTC directly also limits the region’s ability to serve more of the cross-border travel demand via transit and less-polluting modes – exacerbating these burdens on the community.

This project will address these long-standing issues via station redesign. The primary benefits of the project include removal of dangerous pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, enhancement of station accessibility and ADA compliance, and the addition of much needed capacity for critical rail and bus service. In addition, the project will complete the final link of a regional bikeway, widen sidewalks and curbs, improve lighting and signage, and introduce placemaking and pedestrian-oriented design features to improve the urban environment at and around the station.

This project has broad community support, including from State Senator Steve Padilla, San Diego City Councilmember Vivian Moreno, and the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District. This project is also identified as a priority in the Local Community Plan, Regional Plan, California-Baja California Border Master Plan, as well as other programmatic planning documents. Local and regional agencies have been conducting planning and outreach activities since spring 2022 and have developed

conceptual design concepts. These concepts are the result of coordination with federal, state, and local agencies on both sides of the border, local stakeholder groups, and public feedback.

This project is a good use of taxpayer resources because it will address long-standing issues impacting pedestrian safety, accessibility, and operational capacity at the existing station San Ysidro Transit Center. Increased transit accessibility also has the potential to cut down on wait times for nearly 50,000 vehicles that currently queue for several hours each day to pass through the Port of Entry.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(2) (the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or installation of public works, facilities and site or other improvements) and (a)(5) (special projects directed to the removal of material and architectural barriers which restrict the mobility and accessibility of elderly and handicapped persons).

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress