



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE COUNTY OF KAUAI**

**DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR**

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
US Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: POIPU ROAD SAFETY AND MOBILITY PROJECT - BUILD GRANT APPLICATION

Dear Secretary Chao,

The application before you is the culmination of years of planning and design by the Kauai community in partnership with our County team. This rural project addresses our number one transportation priority: safety. At the same time, the Poipu Road Safety and Mobility Project will strengthen tourism, our most important economic sector, by providing safe, convenient, and affordable choices for employees to get to and from work in Kauai's premier resort destination. It will also unleash private investment to provide more workforce housing closer to work and serve as a catalyst for new businesses and jobs, including investment in one of our two Opportunity Zones.

While we are grateful that Kauai has been spared from the severe health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our economy has been hard-hit. At 3%, the State of Hawaii had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation prior to COVID-19. Hawaii's unemployment rate now stands at 34%, one of the highest in the nation. This is primarily due to the significance of tourism for Hawaii's economy.

As we look at ways to diversify our economy, we must also do everything we can to bring tourism back in ways that are stronger, smarter, and more resilient than before, and that is exactly what this project accomplishes. If there ever were a time and place to invest in a transportation project that strengthens our local, state, and national economy, now is that time, Kauai is that place, and Poipu Road Safety and Mobility is that project.

Imua! (Move forward with strength!)

With aloha,


Derek S.K. Kawakami, Mayor

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4444 Rice Street Suite 235 • Lihu'e, Hawai'i 96766 • (808) 241-4900 (b) • (808) 241-6877 (f)

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