**[TRIBAL SAMPLE LETTER]**

**Date**

The Honorable Elaine Chao

Secretary

United States Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.

Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support the President’s Appointment of the Next USDOT Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs

Dear Madam Secretary:

 On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I write to congratulate you on your confirmation as the 18th Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation. We wish you every success as to you oversee the safety and revitalization of our Nation’s transportation infrastructure. I also write to favorably encourage you to support President Trump appointing the next Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Tribal Government Affairs for the Department.

 The position of DAS for Tribal Government Affairs was created in SAFETEA-LU, Pub. L. 109-59, enacted in 2005. The position reflects the national bipartisan policy to promote Indian self-determination and self-governance consistent with the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian tribes. The position is especially important for a number of reasons. First, the DAS for Tribal Government Affairs is charged with the responsibility to plan, coordinate, and implement the Department’s policies and programs serving Indian tribes and coordinating tribal transportation programs and activities among the Department’s modal administrations. President Trump has called for a one trillion dollar investment over the next decade in American infrastructure. Tribal transportation infrastructure needs are great and meeting those needs is key to creating community stability and economic opportunities for our citizens and residents.

The DAS for Tribal Government Affairs is also an essential part of the Department’s on-going effort to establish the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program within the Department, as required by section 1121 of the FAST Act, Pub. L. 114-94. The Tribal Self-Governance Program is a proven model of success that has empowered Indian tribes and tribal organizations and strengthened our capacity to carry out federal programs benefitting Indian tribes and our citizens. The Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program will cut government red tape and help tribal governments delivery successful programs with minimum federal regulations and bureaucracy. Self-governance represents best practices in Indian country.

Under the FAST Act, the Tribal Transportation Program (chapter 2 of title 23) and the Tribal Transit Program (chapter 53 of title 49) distribute over $500 million annually to Indian tribes for road and bridge improvement projects and transit systems serving our communities. These programs break down transportation barriers that persist in tribal communities and link residential communities with schools, hospitals and clinics, tribal government centers, retail stores and businesses and our neighbors. Streamlining these programs under the tribal self-governance program, together with the Department’s competitive and discretionary grants, will enhance our ability to delivery transportation programs, transit services, and highway safety projects for the benefit of our citizens and residents. Indian country transportation infrastructure needs must be part of any national solution to grow and maintain America’s infrastructure.

 I hope that you will welcome President Trump naming the next DAS for Tribal Government Affairs to join your team at the Department and help you improve transportation infrastructure in tribal communities.

 Sincerely,