



May 25, 2007

Mr. James S. Simpson  
Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW.  
Washington, DC 20590

Larry E. Craig  
United States Senator  
520 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Administrator Simpson:

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator  
239 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

We respectfully write to express our support for the Section 5339 Alternatives Analysis grant request submitted to you by the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS).

Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress  
1339 Longworth House Office  
Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The project area is in the Treasure Valley (Ada and Canyon Counties) area of Southwest Idaho. This region, which includes the capital city of Boise, accounts for more than 30 percent of the State of Idaho's population and is the economic hub of the state. It is one of the fastest growing areas in the nation and is served by only one interstate freeway, Interstate 84 (I-84).

Bill Sali  
Member of Congress  
508 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

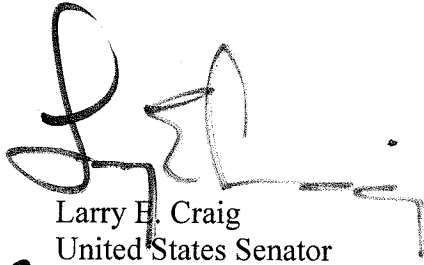
Anticipated to be included in this alternatives analysis is a 43-mile section of underutilized railroad spur that parallels I-84. The spur spans from downtown Boise, west through the cities of Meridian and Nampa, to the city of Caldwell, where it links with the main east-west Union Pacific Railroad line. The preservation of this rail spur is an approved project in SAFETEA-LU (SEC. 3043 (C)(22)).

This project is a key component in the development of a public transit system in the Treasure Valley region. Increasing traffic congestion, decreasing air quality, and the preservation of economic development would be addressed by the construction of a project in the corridor. Absent the development of an alternative to I-84 along existing, underutilized right-of-way, the region will be forced to continue to expand capacity on the existing freeway or develop entirely new roadway facilities. As you are aware, projects such as this typically come at great expense and with diminishing returns.

Southern Idaho is clearly in the midst of a challenging transition from a rural area to an urban, metropolitan region. This project could serve as a model for how other, fast-growing, Intermountain West states can implement a public transit system.

We appreciate your kind consideration of this grant application and hope you will be able to fund this request this year. If you have further questions, please contact Cori Wittman with Senator Craig (224-2752), Gregg Richard with Senator Crapo (224-6142), Malisah Small with Congressman Simpson (225-5531) or Matt Hite with Congressman Sali (225-6611).

Sincerely,



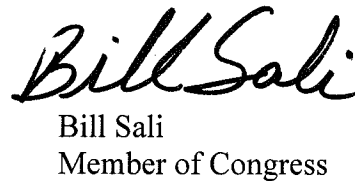
Larry H. Craig  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



Bill Sali  
Member of Congress