



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**James L. Oberstar**  
Chairman

**John L. Mica**

Ranking Republican Member

David Heymsfeld, Chief of Staff  
Ward W. McCarragher, Chief Counsel

September 23, 2009

James W. Coon II, Republican Chief of Staff

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to communicate my strong support for the Manatee County Port Authority's TIGER Grant application for federal funding assistance for the Port Manatee Marine Highway Intermodal Container Terminal Development Project. The combined direct and indirect/induced full-time employment which will be created by the completed project will reach 1,090 new jobs with an annual total port-dependent wage of \$31 million within 15-months of funding.

The subject TIGER Grant application for \$36.12 million includes four integrated components: i) Intermodal Container Yard Phase 1; (ii) Berth 12 Extension; (iii) Mobile Harbor Crane and (iv) Two Switch Locomotives. The sponsor is committed to matching the requested grant with a coordinated \$35.33 million investment in supporting infrastructure improvements.

This project will not only immediately create additional jobs and economic impact, but will assist in sustaining and growing Port Manatee as a major economic engine for west central Florida. Currently, the Port is responsible for more than \$2.3 billion annually to the region's economy and supports directly and indirectly more than 22,000 jobs in Manatee County. It ranks as Florida's fourth largest seaport among the state's 14 deepwater ports.

The combined features of this project with the South Channel Extension Project, which the Port is carrying out on its own, will enhance the M-10 Marine Highway port-to-port system with Brownsville, Texas. It will create the required infrastructure components in Florida necessary to sustain efficient and competitive intermodal container operations.

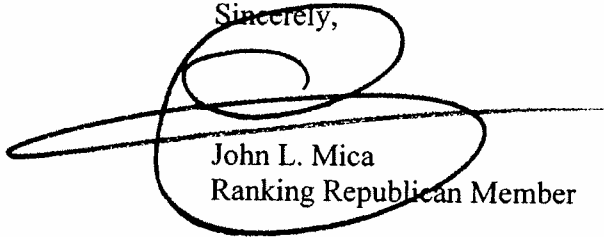
September 23, 2009

Page 2

Lastly, please note that Manatee County currently has a 12.2 percent unemployment rate and in accordance with the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, Port Manatee is located in an Economically Distressed Area.

This project will result in immediate and long term economic benefit to all of west central Florida. I urge your close and careful consideration to providing a TIGER grant to assist the Port with this important economic development initiative.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

John L. Mica  
Ranking Republican Member