



**CENTERSTATE
CORPORATION FOR
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 26, 2016

Dear Secretary Foxx:

With this letter, CenterState CEO strongly endorses the Port of Oswego Authority's application to the U.S. DOT's 2016 TIGER Grant program for the inland port and commerce center project. CenterState CEO is an independent and forward-thinking economic development strategist, business leadership organization, and chamber of commerce dedicated to the success of its 2,000 + members and the prosperity of the CenterState NY region.

For the past few years, we have been working with the Port of Oswego and numerous regional stakeholders on the development of an inland port, a transportation project that will catalyze the growth of our region's businesses and manufacturers. Access to more cost-effective transportation options through this project will attract new investment; we have been in discussions with a number of businesses that will locate—or commit to staying—in the CenterState NY region...*if* we construct an inland port. This project will immediately impact a variety of industry sectors—for example, agricultural and forestry, manufacturing, and distribution operations— providing the infrastructure for them to compete globally.

This inland port project was included as a strategic initiative within Central NY's winning proposal to Governor Andrew Cuomo's *Upstate Revitalization Initiative* competition, adding further dollars to the state funds already committed. TIGER funding will enable the Port of Oswego to fully equip the inland port facility and provide final dollars towards rail extensions and improvements so that our rural manufacturers can connect to the port and achieve the cost reductions and efficiencies necessary for them to continue their trajectories of growth.

Onondaga County offers a centralized location for an inland port, allowing our businesses to reach millions of customers in one day. The project will also have a real and substantial impact on the congestion at the Port of New York/New Jersey, moving containers more quickly and efficiently via short- and long-haul rail service to our region.

Always with an eye towards economic inclusion, CenterState CEO's Work Train program will be customized to provide employer-driven workforce development in the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics industry so that Syracuse's un- and under-employed residents can

LEADING BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN CENTERSTATE NEW YORK

access the new inland port jobs. This collaborative effort will provide real “Ladders of Opportunity” by enabling Syracuse residents to access TDL career pathways and escape the high levels of poverty found within many of our city’s neighborhoods.

I hope that the sense of great economic transformation and promise that surrounds this project translates upon review of the Port of Oswego’s application. Please feel free to contact me at 315-470-1800 if you require any additional information. Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. M. Simpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert M. Simpson
President & CEO