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GRETCHEN M. BATAILLE, PRESIDENT

May 4, 2009

The Honorable John Carona  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security  
P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Senator Carona:

Thank you for your leadership and service to North Texas, especially with regards to transportation issues. As the President of the fourth largest university in Texas, an efficient transportation system throughout the North Texas area is essential to our continued success. UNT is doing all we can to encourage the use of public transportation. With over 1.5 million rides each year, the University of North Texas is the largest client served by the Denton County Transportation Authority. However, without additional resources for transportation, gridlock threatens the vitality of the entire area.

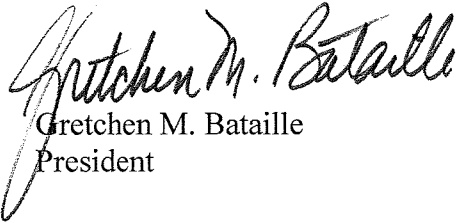
Unfortunately, traffic congestion throughout North Texas is only getting worse. According to the 2008 INRIX National Traffic Scorecard, the Dallas-Fort Worth area is the fourth most congested metropolitan region in the nation. With over 6.6 million people, the Dallas-Fort Worth area is the largest in-land population center in the United States. This number is expected to grow to over 9 million by 2030. In addition to this large population, according to the North Central Texas Council of Governments, North Texas is the leading intermodal distribution center in the Southwest and is also one of the top distribution centers in North America. With Interstate 35, DFW International Airport, Alliance Airport, the International Inland Port of Dallas, BNSF Railway, and Union Pacific, North Texas essentially is a staging area for domestic and international truck, rail and air cargo into the United States. While this is important for the economy of North Texas, it also creates serious transportation problems throughout the entire region.

As we all know, traffic congestion creates more than just an inconvenience for travelers—it also affects emergency preparedness, economic development, and air quality issues. For these reasons, I am strongly encouraged by legislation that you authored that will allow North Texas voters a transparent and accountable process to address the region's mobility challenges and future transportation needs. The legislation also provides important safeguards that will protect the citizens of North Texas. At a time when current law limits cities and counties from raising revenue necessary to fund regional rail and transportation improvements, your legislation

provides a local option tool for metropolitan areas designed to raise new money for new roadways, passenger rail service, and bridges. However, this legislation also provides needed safeguards by requiring that all projects and fees be approved by the voter as well as requires that funds raised in a county can only be spent on projects located within the county.

Thank you for your dedication to our region and State in leading this important transportation initiative. If I can ever be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Gretchen M. Bataille  
President