

December 7, 2023

Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E.
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
jared.perdue@dot.state.fl.us



Re: FDOT's Rejection of Funds Allocated to Reduce Congestion and Improve Air Quality in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Secretary Perdue:

Sierra Club, the oldest, largest environmental advocacy organization in the nation with more than 240,000 members and supporters in Florida, is deeply concerned by your recent decision to politicize Florida's roadways and economy and to reject \$320 million allocated in 23 USC 104 to keep our air and interstates clear. We urge you to reconsider this decision, and to take the state's needs seriously.

Florida has over 22.5 million residents, 137 million visitors, and continues to grow. With some of the worst traffic in the nation, any Floridian will tell you about the exponentially worsening congestion across the state.¹ How can Florida's supply chain hope to get moving if FDOT continues to allow our roadways, and the tens of thousands of jobs they depend on, to suffocate?

The Biden Administration has invested billions of dollars in creating opportunities for the working class, keeping our air and water clean, and fixing our infrastructure. However, the DeSantis Administration and your department have chosen to ignore its responsibilities to Florida's environment and economy and reject the opportunities provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.²

As Floridians deal with skyrocketing insurance premiums³ and higher rates of inflation than other states in the union,⁴ your fiduciary responsibility to Florida taxpayers is more important than ever. Your politicization of this ambitious investment into our state's infrastructure and

¹Rachel Newcomb, "Which Cities Have the Best and Worst Commutes?", *Moneygeek*, June 2, 2023, <https://www.moneygeek.com/insurance/auto/analysis/cities-with-the-worst-commutes/>

²Brian Burgess, "Five million dollar DeSantis veto triggers cancellation of \$346 million in federal funding," *The Capitolist*, June 25, 2023, <https://thecapitolist.com/five-million-dollar-desantis-veto-triggers-cancellation-of-346-million-in-federal-funding/>

³Greg Allen, "Feeling the pinch of high home insurance rates? It's not getting better anytime soon," *National Public Radio*, October, 26, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/26/1208590263/florida-homeowners-insurance-soaring-expensive>

⁴Adam McCann, "Changes in Inflation by City," *Wallethub*, October 12, 2023, <https://wallethub.com/edu/cities-inflation/107537>

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economy has left hundreds of millions of dollars on the table. The impacts of this irresponsible decision are clear: Either you intend to neglect Florida's congestion issues and allow our air quality to continue to worsen, or you expect Florida taxpayers to foot a \$320 million bill that was already paid for.

Don't play politics with our air and economy. Spare Florida taxpayers from another multi-million dollar burden.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susannah Randolph". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susannah Randolph
Chapter Director
Sierra Club Florida