



January 11, 2017

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson,

On behalf of the National Retail Federation (NRF), we are writing to express our strong support for the nomination of Elaine Chao as the next Secretary of the Department of Transportation. Mrs. Chao has an incredible history, knowledge and experience within the transportation industry and we think she is perfectly suited to be the next Secretary. We encourage Senators to support her nomination.

NRF's members are among the nation's largest shippers, moving hundreds of billions of dollars worth of merchandise through the nation's ports, rail lines, and highways. The condition of this interconnected supply chain and its ability to move freight quickly, efficiently and safely are vital to retailers' businesses, as well as those of American manufacturers, agricultural producers and the millions of workers they employ. The next Secretary of Transportation must address ongoing issues of infrastructure funding while ensuring our transportation systems are truly state of the art and able to handle the expected increases in freight flows.

With her previous experience within the Department of Transportation as the Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Deputy Administrator of the Maritime Administration and also as Chair of the Federal Maritime Commission, Mrs. Chao has the background and experience to address some of the key supply chain issues facing our nation and our global competitiveness.

NRF is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

We look forward to working with Committee members and the new Secretary on our key supply chain priorities. If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Gold, NRF's Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy.

Sincerely,

David French  
Senior Vice President  
Government Relations