

TOM COLE

4TH DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON RULES
RANKING REPUBLICAN

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
VICE RANKING REPUBLICAN

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES -
RANKING REPUBLICAN

DEFENSE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

February 12, 2020

PLEASE REPLY TO:

- 2207 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6165
- 2424 SPRINGER DRIVE
SUITE 201
NORMAN, OK 73069
(405) 329-6500
- 711 SW D AVENUE
SUITE 201
LAWTON, OK 73501
(580) 357-2131
- SUGG CLINIC OFFICE BUILDING
100 EAST 13TH STREET, SUITE 213
ADA, OK 74820
(580) 436-5375

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am pleased to submit a letter of support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application for the US-81 realignment project in Grady County.

ODOT would use these grant funds to advance construction of a new highway alignment to help move heavy freight and oilfield traffic on US-81 out of the congested downtown area and onto a four-lane, controlled-access highway on the west side of Chickasha. The project includes construction of eight miles of realigned US-81 between US-62 and SH-19, six new interchanges at major roads and two-grade separated rail crossings. These upgrades will facilitate safe and efficient movement of freight traffic, supporting regional and local economic activity while improving local access, commerce and general mobility.

This rural region's economy is driven by wind energy, oil and gas, military operations, and agricultural industries, but is currently disadvantaged by the lack of an efficient north-south freight corridor. The current US-81 route through Chickasha has 14 signalized intersections and two 90 degree turns, which slows freight traffic, especially oversized loads, trying to navigate the busy downtown area. If this ODOT project is selected for an INFRA grant, the funding will help improve travel for more than 16,000 vehicles per day on US-81, of which 17 percent is commercial truck traffic.

US-81 anchors the rural hubs of Enid, Kingfisher, El Reno, Chickasha and Duncan and serves as a freight route to five major military facilities. This project is expected to have significant positive impacts in southwestern Oklahoma by providing for safer and more efficient travel and facilitating increased economic activity.

I thank you in advance for your serious consideration of ODOT's application for this INFRA grant. Please contact Carter Cloud in my office at 202-225-6165 if you need any further assistance as you consider this important project.

Sincerely,

Tom Cole
Member of Congress