

JAMES M. INHOFE
OKLAHOMA

WASHINGTON OFFICE
205 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603
(202) 224-4721

TULSA OFFICE
1924 SOUTH UTICA, SUITE 530
TULSA, OK 74104
(918) 748-5111

OKLAHOMA CITY OFFICE
3817 NORTHWEST EXPRESSWAY, SUITE 780
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73112
(405) 208-8841

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603

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July 12, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

This letter expresses my support for the joint Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)—Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) application for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant to widen and rehabilitate State Highway 28 (SH 28). ODOT and GRDA share responsibility for the three bridges along SH 28, including the Pensacola Dam Bridge, and have set aside partial funding to enhance and repair the structures. This project is extremely important to the region of northeastern Oklahoma as it will increase the safety of all highway users as well as extend the life of these three bridges.

State Highway 28 is a vital resource to northeast Oklahoma, providing a connector for tourists to access marinas, resorts and state parks located near Grand Lake O' the Cherokees. In addition to the tourism benefits SH 28 provides, particularly during the summer months when the area population almost triples in size, the highway ensures the movement of goods and services between the rural and small communities throughout the region as well as facilitate the daily movement of fire trucks, ambulances and other public safety and emergency vehicles.

The Pensacola Dam bridges were constructed in 1940 and were considered an engineering marvel of the time in terms of construction and expedited schedule. This project will similarly be a feat of engineering and coordination among multiple groups. The project has the right partners in place and has consistently met early milestones. With the BUILD grant funding, the widening and rehabilitation of the SH 28 bridges will continue to be a structure vital to northeast Oklahoma for many years to come.

I fully support projects like this that invest in needed improvements to critical infrastructure that would create and retain jobs while improving quality of life. Please contact Dan Hillenbrand in my office at 202-224-2302 or Dan_Hillenbrand@inchofe.senate.gov if you need any further assistance as you consider this important project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator