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Office of the Chief

Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief

Bryan Warner
Deputy Principal Chief

May 13, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: In Support of Oklahoma Department of Transportation's Application for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant

Dear Secretary Chao:

Osiyo. On behalf of Cherokee Nation, I want to express our support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant. ODOT is applying for this grant to construct monopile moorings at three different locations (Port of Muskogee, Tulsa Port of Catoosa, Oakley's Port 33) on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS). The proposed plan would replace obsolete anchors with a modernized mooring system that will enable safe harbor for mariners, provide reliability in the event of a flood, and reduce ongoing maintenance costs at the ports. These three ports are all within or adjacent to Cherokee Nation's reservation boundaries and we maintain strong working relationships with the ports and ODOT.

The three ports that will be supported by this grant employ nearly 9,000 workers, total 3,600 acres of industrial park and process nearly 5.5 million tons of cargo annually. This MKARNS Mooring Modernization Project will create a more permanent, safe and efficient industry standard to secure vessels and will be designed to accommodate normal navigation conditions as well as extreme flooding conditions that have been encountered over the last several years and enhance harbor safety by eliminating risk of loose barges and damage to infrastructure. The project will expand much needed capacity for vessels within the waterway and prepare ports for forecasted increases in freight demand through the MKARNS. The project will implement the first of two phases of investment and mooring improvements. New mooring infrastructure will be an investment in long-term strength and security for Oklahoma and Cherokee Nation to continue to be a major player in the U.S and global markets. The MKARNS waterway links Oklahoma to a 12-state service area with various domestic ports of the U.S. inland waterways system and foreign ports by way of New Orleans and the Gulf of Intracoastal waterway.

ODOT is committed to leveraging all local resources for this project. The Cherokee Nation strongly supports this effort to make needed infrastructure improvements and bring dollars and jobs to eastern Oklahoma.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. If you have any questions or require further information, please contact our Manager of Government Relations, Adam McCreary, at adam.mccreary@cn-bus.com or (918) 697-1163.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHUCK HOSKIN JR.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation