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September 2, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Bridge Investment Program for the US-69 Bridge Replacements in Durant

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA), a ten-county economic development district in south-central Oklahoma, we would like to express our support for of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for a Bridge Investment Program discretionary grant to assist with the US-69 Bridge Replacements in Durant, Oklahoma. Durant is the location of the SODA corporate offices, the headquarters of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The rehabilitation of the US-69 is both necessary and urgent to provide safety and resilience. This project will replace four bridges over Arkansas Street, the Kiamichi Railroad and Main Street. One of the bridges is structurally deficient and the other three are expected to become structurally deficient over the next few years.

The proposed Bridge Investment Program for the US-69 Bridge Replacements in Durant project provides a vital contribution to the needed infrastructure improvements in a rapidly developing community. The proposed project is crucial for creating bridges that will safely satisfy all the necessary requirements of the region. We urge you to fully fund this important project.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to call on us should you have questions or if you require additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven C. Mills, Ph.D.
Executive Director