

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 15, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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

The US-81 project will greatly reduce congestion through downtown Chickasha by constructing a new controlled-access four-lane highway alignment to help move heavy freight, agriculture, and energy sector traffic. The project includes the construction of more than 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, pedestrian safety, air quality, commerce, and general mobility in Chickasha.

This rural region's economy is driven by the agriculture and energy 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 and causes congestion. This is especially problematic for oversized loads, such as trucks moving wind turbine blades, trying to navigate the busy downtown area. If this project is selected for an INFRA grant, the funding will 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 also serves as a freight route to five major military facilities, as well as facilitating regional and interstate commerce north to Wichita, Kansas and south to Fort Worth, Texas and beyond. 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.

We thank you in advance for your serious consideration of ODOT's application for this INFRA grant. Please contact Victor Sarmiento at victor_sarmiento@inchofe.senate.gov if you need any further assistance as you consider this important project.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Kevin Hern
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress



Frank D. Lucas
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



Stephanie Bice
Member of Congress