

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 9, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to submit this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program to continue and complete critical improvements along the I-44 corridor in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The segment between the Arkansas River and the I-244 junction in West Tulsa was built before the creation of the Interstate System and is the oldest remaining section of federal Interstate maintained by ODOT. This outdated section of the federal Interstate has inadequate and poorly designed access points to surrounding neighborhoods and businesses, along with narrow lanes and deteriorated pavements. Two immediate issues further compound the critical need in this area: 1) the construction of a new turnpike connecting all of West Tulsa into this corridor, which will drive significant new local business and residential growth; and 2) an increasingly congested choke-point as traffic is forced into narrowing into this older corridor to cross the Arkansas River, resulting in near-daily traffic accidents.

This project will improve the existing interchange at the I-44/US-75 junction, reconstruct and widen I-44 over the Arkansas River, and improve Interstate on- and off-ramps to connect local communities. This project will also reconnect a low-income neighborhood previously bisected when the existing interchange was constructed. This grant will help connect the vast Tulsa Metropolitan trails system, the Gathering Place, and the Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness to neighborhoods on the west side of the interchange. ODOT is already investing \$90 million to replace five deficient bridges in this same corridor. When all phases of this effort are complete, this area will experience an overwhelming reduction in congestion and increase in opportunities for future growth, similar to the effects of improvements to other portions of the I-44 corridor during the past decade.

We thank you in advance for your strong consideration of ODOT's application for this RAISE grant. Please contact Victor Sarmiento, on my staff, at [victor\\_sarmiento@inhofe.senate.gov](mailto:victor_sarmiento@inhofe.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



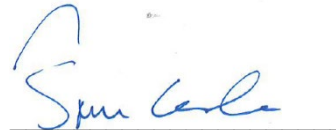
Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
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Frank D. Lucas  
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Tom Cole  
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Stephanie Bice  
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