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July 28, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: I-40 and SH-100 Bridge Replacements over the Arkansas River at Webbers Falls Project

Dear Secretary Duffy:

We are pleased to submit this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Grant, I-40 and SH-100 Bridge Replacements over the Arkansas River at Webbers Falls Project in Muskogee and Sequoyah Counties.

The bridges on I-40 and SH-100 are vital structures that are currently fracture-critical and functionally obsolete. They also risk becoming structurally deficient, which would impose significant travel time costs due to freight traffic detours if load posting becomes necessary. The replacement of these bridges represents a strategic investment in the regional and national freight networks, preventing significant economic impact to both interstate and marine highway systems if disrupted. As the only Arkansas River crossings in the area, they are a vital component of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS), enabling Oklahoma to move roughly 5 million tons of barge freight annually and generating a \$5.6 billion sales impact in global waterborne trade. In addition, Emirates Global Aluminum's decision to locate a primary aluminum production plant in Oklahoma at our Tulsa Port of Inola, as announced by President Trump on May 15, 2025, will add two (2) million additional tons of annual freight moves on the MKARNS which enhances the need to have safe and reliable infrastructure to support national supply chains.

Replacing these aging, fracture-critical bridges directly aligns with the Program's goals for high-impact projects. New infrastructure will ensure the Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS) and MKARNS waterway network remain in good repair, significantly improving safety and mobility through increased shoulder width and railing height. These operational enhancements will increase economic competitiveness by expanding connectivity between local and national markets, avoiding costly freight detours, improving emergency response times, and ensuring uninterrupted access to regionally significant locations, including state and federal parks and the Oklahoma National Guard Training Center, Camp Gruber.

Thank you in advance for your strong consideration of ODOT's essential project for BIP award. Please contact our offices if you need any further assistance as you consider this important proposal.

Sincerely,

David Yarbrough, P.E.
Executive Director