

# McIntosh County Commissioners



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Clifford McElhane, Chairman  
Robert Ziegler, Vice-Chairman  
Loyal "Dean" Taylor, Member

June 22, 2026

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

**Re: FY 2026 Bridge Investment Program Grant: SH-9 Crossings at Flat Rock and Wallace Creek**

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I am writing to express my full support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation in their application for funding through the Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program (BIP) for improvements to the State Highway 9 (SH-9) crossings at Flat Rock Creek and Wallace Creek. Replacing this aging infrastructure is essential to ensuring long-term regional safety, supply chain resilience, and economic vitality.

As a critical regional corridor, SH-9 connects communities and supports economic activity, freight movement, tourism, and emergency evacuation across eastern Oklahoma. The project will replace a culvert at Flat Rock Creek and the Wallace Creek bridge—constructed in 1937 and currently in poor condition—both of which are vital to safe and reliable travel. By addressing geometric deficiencies and improving traffic flow, the project will enhance supply chain efficiency, reduce delays from weight-restricted structures, and support the movement of aggregate and other essential freight. It will also improve access to regional tourism destinations such as Lake Eufaula, benefiting local economies.

The proposed improvements align directly with BIP's core goals by reducing structurally deficient infrastructure and enhancing safety. The project will modernize roadway geometry, upgrade guardrails, and add 8-foot shoulders to provide vehicle recovery space and accommodate non-motorized users, improving overall system reliability. The design of the structures will better withstand flood events, reducing the likelihood of repeated damage and future disaster costs.

ODOT has advanced this project to a shovel-ready stage, continuing to build on Oklahoma's phenomenal progress in improving bridge conditions statewide, and reflects a continued commitment to a safe and efficient transportation network. Strategic investments like this deliver measurable returns by lowering lifecycle costs, strengthening rural connectivity, and preserving critical infrastructure without wasteful spending. This is exactly the kind of project that merits support under the Bridge Investment Program.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to fully fund this project through the BIP grant program. Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to strengthening America's infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Loyal "Dean" Taylor in black ink.

Loyal "Dean" Taylor  
District 1 Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Clifford McElhane in blue ink.

Clifford McElhane  
District 2 Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Robert Ziegler in black ink.

Robert Ziegler  
District 3 Commissioner