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February 25, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write in strong support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application for the I-44 and US-75 interchange in Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

This project would reconstruct the I-44 and US-75 interchange into a multilevel interchange and widen I-44 west of the Arkansas River in Tulsa to six lanes. The existing narrow four-lane segment of I-44 is the oldest section of interstate pavement in Oklahoma, predating the creation of the Interstate Highway System in 1956. In addition to poor pavement conditions and lack of shoulders, this section has substandard ramps, bridges and service roads that do not support current traffic.

Tulsa County is experiencing tremendous growth due to residential and commercial growth. This development has exceeded the capabilities of the existing infrastructure, resulting in considerable traffic congestion, increased crashes and travel unreliability. In addition to current travel needs, ODOT expects a significant increase in traffic volumes in the coming years due to nearby capacity expansions. Just to the west, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) is working to expand 20 miles of I-44/Turner Turnpike from four to six lanes to support growing freight traffic between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, the state's two largest cities. Additionally, OTA will soon begin construction of the Gilcrease Expressway, a new five-mile turnpike on Tulsa's west side that connects to I-44 immediately adjacent to this project.

Improvements to I-44 and US-75 in this area would alleviate a bottleneck on a key freight corridor that connects Tulsa with Kansas City, Saint Louis and beyond. These improvements will increase safety, mobility and economic development benefits in the region.

I strongly support ODOT's application for this INFRA grant for the I-44 and US-75 interchange in Tulsa County, and appreciate your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator