

FRANK D. LUCAS  
3RD DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

2405 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3603  
(202) 225-5565  
[www.house.gov/lucas](http://www.house.gov/lucas)

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3603

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
United States

Ref: BUILD Grant Award for the Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing in support of the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation discretionary grant application by the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA), the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), and its partners.

With your assistance, ODOT will be able to safely and efficiently move freight throughout Southwest Oklahoma, thereby reducing freight bottlenecks and improving oversize/overweight route issues through networks connected to greater Oklahoma and the country. Freight movement is threatened by inefficiencies in the network, projected growth in the years ahead, and a lack of adequate technology infrastructure. The BUILD grant award will help provide planning efforts to safely and effectively move freight throughout the region and will equip and prepare freight networks for present and future technological advancements.

This planning initiative enjoys broad support because Southwest Oklahoma supports many robust freight-dependent industries, including oil and gas, agriculture, wind energy, and military installations. The southwest region is a vital component in connecting statewide freight flows. The state of Oklahoma transports over 800 million tons of freight annually, which includes 512.2 million tons through, 79.1 million tons inbound, and 99.7 tons outbound throughout Oklahoma. The value of these transported goods is roughly \$1.3 billion, contributing substantially to the state's economy. An improved transportation system in southwest Oklahoma will provide room for our state's vital industries to grow, contributing to the future economic security and stability of our state and nation.

I hope you and the U.S. DOT will award a BUILD grant to the SWODA in support of its Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan. Your support will make it possible for our region to further strengthen the impact of decades of significant state and local investments in this important region.

Sincerely,



Frank D. Lucas  
Member of Congress