

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 South Western Oklahoma Development Authority's (SWODA) application for a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to provide for the planning of improvements to the freight corridor in Southwestern Oklahoma.

The Southwest Oklahoma freight corridor currently lacks lighted and electric signage, broadband coverage to provide the capability for connected commercial vehicles, and retains many at-grade highway-rail crossings from the system's initial design. Each of the 16 counties represented by SWODA has signaled the impact of improved freight mobility on their economic outlook and future growth opportunities.

Each year, the Oklahoma freight network transports 800 million tons of cargo worth \$1.3 trillion via road, rail, and waterway. A vital portion of that network, the southwest region of Oklahoma supports many of the state's critical industries, including the U.S. Military, agricultural commodities, and energy products. It is important that regional planning organizations have the tools they need to improve the freight system to best serve their economic engines and connect them to the multi-modal commercial thoroughfares which allow for swift transportation of goods to national and international markets.

A RAISE grant would provide the needed funds for SWODA to secure expert analysis of the network's current freight movement and provide recommendations to improve overall roadway safety and quality, reduce freight bottlenecks to mitigate congestion, and connect the region to multi-modal networks.

We urge your strong consideration of SWODA's application for a RAISE grant in support of its Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan. A RAISE grant would reinforce decades of past state and local investment and provide a region-wide strategy for future freight improvements. Please contact Victor Sarmiento in my office at victor_sarmiento@inhofe.senate.gov if you need further assistance as you consider this application.

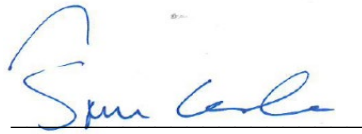
Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Frank D. Lucas
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cole", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Tom Cole
Member of Congress