



5/24/2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
United States

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Altus Chamber of Commerce and the Altus Southwest Area Economic Development Corporation, I am writing in support of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) 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 RAISE 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.

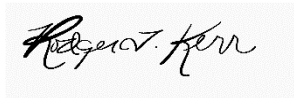
This planning initiative enjoys broad support because Southwest Oklahoma supports many robust freight-dependent industries, including oil and gas, agriculture, wind energy, and military installations. The southwest region is a vital to component in connecting statewide freight flows. Altus Chamber of Commerce and the Altus Southwest Area Economic Development Corporation Community area businesses and industries will benefit directly from Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan. We are already seeing an increase in freight transportation in our area due to the amount of cotton produced and processed, as well as ongoing production in our current industries. We for see growth in the cotton industry in our region, this growth will increase both truck and rail traffic locally and regionally. Portions of a road improvement plan have already been completed on connecting routes in Texas and ongoing thru this region of Oklahoma. Due to budget issues and other projects this area of Oklahoma has seen little road infrastructure work and is certainly behind in this type of development and improvements. The current traffic in our area has been growing and roads have been deteriorating under the growing weight and traffic count. In some areas truck drivers have started to create their own detours routes thru residential and business districts to avoid rough roads other traffic issues. This creates a safety

concern for our community. In one area, on a particular stretch of road truckers have actually been declining loads, because of a one mile stretch of road they will not drive, due to the condition of the road and the wear and tear it puts on the trucks as well as the drivers.

With the increase in cotton production and processing in our area as well as the potential for improved transportation infrastructure. We are increasing our efforts in growing our warehousing possibilities as another form of job creation and economic driver in our local area. There is available property in the area where the improvements will allow for future development and growth. As we are continuing to recover from the COVID19 crisis there has been talk of migration and growth back to rural areas as well as talk of bringing more production and manufacturing back to the United States to lessen our dependence on foreign production. Again, we feel that with improved infrastructure we will improve our chances of being part of the growth of the United States economy.

**On behalf of** Altus Chamber of Commerce and the Altus Southwest Area Economic Development Corporation, I hope you and the U.S. DOT will award a RAISE 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodger T. Kerr", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Rodger T. Kerr  
CEO and President Altus Chamber of Commerce  
Ex. Director Altus/SW Area Economic Development Corporation  
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