

June 21, 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:

I have been informed about and am highly supportive 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. Many organizations will benefit directly from Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan that will include:

- Assessment of the current state of air, truck and rail freight system operations in southwest Oklahoma,
- Addressing future freight congestion issues including key regional bottlenecks, key opportunities, gaps, and barriers to improve and promote economic development and job growth within the region's agriculture industry, logistics and manufacturing industries and oil and gas industries,
- Identifying infrastructure deficiencies, potential technologies to increase flow and safety, system preservation, identify links that connect mobility of air, truck and rail freight modalities to regional economic development goals and effectively identify and prioritize projects, and
- Establishing a set of strategic recommendations and guidance that outlines decision-making processes and targeted regional actions and policies for priority investments within both urban and rural environments of the southwest Oklahoma.

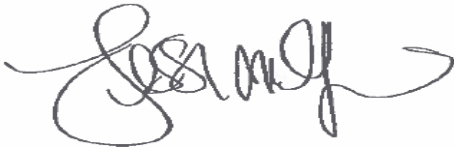
Projections for long-haul freight trucks continues to show an increase on Interstates and non-interstates. The impact of this growth on the I-35 corridor from the Texas State line north to Kansas will continue to cause bottlenecks and congestion. Development of the southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan will allow the coordination and prioritization of strategic improvements that will assist in alternative routes to access western Oklahoma and the western I-40 corridor, providing opportunities in efficiency and economic growth. 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 move freight safely and effectively 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. 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 statewide economy.

It is my hope you and the U.S. DOT will award a RAISE grant to the SWODA in support of its Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan. To say this project is of regional significance is an understatement. As applications are evaluated, please carefully consider this project's merits and how it would accrue benefits to our region and all of those that travel through it for decades to come.

Respectfully,



Senator Jessica Garvin
Oklahoma State Senate
Senate District 43



Senator Lonnie Paxton
Oklahoma State Senate
Senate District 23



Senator John Montgomery
Oklahoma State Senate
Senate District 32



Senator Chris Kidd
Oklahoma State Senate
Senate District 31