

Oklahoma Southwest Alliance  
P.O Box 652  
Fort Cobb, OK 73038

June 11, 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:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant application submitted by the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA), the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), and its partners to fund the Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan.

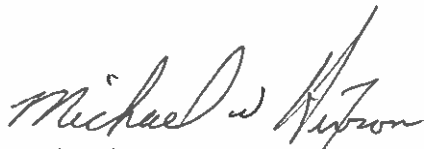
The Oklahoma Southwest Alliance, a regional economic development consortium, located in rural, Southwest Oklahoma requests your support for the Southwest Oklahoma Regional Freight Plan Project application for the United States Department of Transportation's RAISE grant. We also request that this project be funded at 100% by US Department of Transportation in effort to support a 16-county rural initiative to provide for economic growth and address future freight mobility in southwest Oklahoma.

During the process to develop 16 county long range transportation plans, stakeholders identified the need to develop a regional plan to address freight issues, concerns and initiatives for a 20-year planning horizon. The Plan will assess the current state of air, truck and rail freight system operations and identify ways to effectively prioritize and address future freight congestion issues, key regional bottlenecks, 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 address 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. The outcome resulting from the development of the Regional Freight Plan will be 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.

Our rural economy depends on continued growth in freight movement, job creation to support that growth, and access to regionally significant facilities including Fort Sill Fires of Excellence in Comanche County and Altus Air Force Base in Jackson County. In addition, our local businesses need unimpeded access for customers and an efficient and competitive freight corridor. The improvements this project will generate will benefit community residents, local businesses, local and international freight, and most importantly, improve the public safety and efficiency of transportation in this region.

I know how important this project is for this region, industries and communities. The growth of southwest Oklahoma and the safety of my constituents and those that travel the roads. Projects like this are vital to growth and prosperity within a rural community; to say this project is of regional significance is an understatement. I look forward to watching this region grow in the years to come when this strategic project is completed. Please let me know if you have any questions for me.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael W. Hixson Sr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Michael W. Hixson Sr.  
Chairman  
Oklahoma Southwest Alliance