

September 8, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to support the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant funding to rehabilitate and improve numerous bridges throughout the state, namely, Interstate 40 (I-40) over Portland and the Interstate 44 (I-44) 'K' Interchange. Funding from this grant will guarantee safe commutes for thousands of Oklahomans and will further expand economic activity throughout the state.

I-40 is a vital interstate corridor that serves as the primary east-west route across the nation, the state of Oklahoma, and through the City of Oklahoma City. The I-40 corridor had significant federal investment to improve travel in the region with the I-40 Crosstown Expressway reconstruction, which was completed in 2015. The BIP Grant application for I-40 over Portland and the I-44 'K' Interchange will improve the infrastructure directly west and adjacent to the improved Crosstown Expressway. This interchange provides access to several key areas, including the Oklahoma River and River Trail system, the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds and regional and national businesses (including Dell Corporation and Mathis Brothers Furniture). The I-40 corridor through the project area carries significant traffic, with about 125,000 vehicles using the area daily. Traffic volumes are projected to increase more than 30% by 2051.

The interchange project's primary goal is to reconstruct and rehabilitate bridges and roadways on the present alignment to promote safer operations and replace facilities that are close to the end of their design life. The bridges included in the project are rated as structurally deficient or are at risk of becoming structurally deficient in the near future. The proposed I-40 bridge replacements would help to provide lane balance across and through the interchange, add capacity, include proper safety shoulder widths, and meet AASHTO vertical clearance requirements.

Investing in the bridges today will allow the area to avoid costly detours should the bridges further deteriorate and require closing. This project will support critical mobility, safety, and good repair goals for ODOT. I appreciate your consideration of the ODOT application for BIP grant funding. Please contact Alexandra Slocum (202-224-4721 or Alexandra_Slocum@inchofe.senate.gov) on my staff if you have any questions related to this project.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator