



THE STATE CHAMBER

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 30590-0001

**RE: Oklahoma Department of Transportation INFRA application for I-44 improvements between the Arkansas River and I-244 in Tulsa County**

Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's application for INFRA grant funding to continue and complete critically needed improvements to the I-44 corridor in Tulsa.

The State Chamber of Oklahoma represents businesses across Oklahoma. We are invested in making Oklahoma the best place to do business, and our members believe the INFRA grant will provide our state new economic development opportunities. Transportation infrastructure investment is vital to Oklahoma's success, and to interstate commerce, as Oklahoma is the meeting place of I-40, I-35 and I-44. We know it is vital to support important transformational investments, like this one, to boost development and growth.

The segment between the Arkansas River and the I-244 junction in west Tulsa was built before the creation of the interstate system and is the oldest remaining section of interstate that ODOT maintains. This antiquated section stretches through an under-served area of Tulsa with inadequate and poorly designed access points to those neighborhoods and businesses, along with narrow lanes and deteriorated pavements.

Two immediate issues are further compounding the critical needs in this area: the construction of a new turnpike connecting all of west Tulsa into this corridor, which will create new business and residential growth in addition to increased traffic; and an extremely congested choke-point at the Arkansas River where traffic narrows into this older corridor, resulting in near-daily crashes.

ODOT currently has a \$90 million project underway to replace five deficient bridges in the I-44/US-75 corridor along which includes some widening improvements at the interchange. But four additional large-scale projects are still needed to add highway capacity, build a multi-level interchange and make improvements at the Arkansas River bridge which is one of the few river crossings in Tulsa. Once all phases are complete, this area will see a reduction in the near-standstill congestion and open itself for growth opportunities, much like what has been seen with other improvements to I-44 in Tulsa during the past decade.

ODOT would use INFRA grant funding toward the needed \$205 million in interchange improvements. This would allow three projects to combine into one single project and greatly expedite the work of addressing the safety and congestion in a timely manner to achieve a functional interstate with a modern interchange. The safe and efficient movement of the growing commuter, freight and commerce traffic depend on it.

I thank you in advance for your serious consideration of ODOT's application for this INFRA grant. Please contact Emily Crouch in my office at (405) 272-4421 if you need any further assistance as you consider this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chad Warmington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President & CEO  
State Chamber of Oklahoma