

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to submit a letter of support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) application for a Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) for the realignment of US-81 in Grady County, Oklahoma.

The current US-81 route through Chickasha has 14 signalized intersections and two 90 degree turns, which slows freight traffic and causes congestion. This is especially problematic for oversized loads, such as trucks moving wind turbine blades, trying to navigate the busy downtown area. US-81 anchors the rural hubs of Enid, Kingfisher, El Reno, Chickasha, and Duncan and serves as a freight route to five major military facilities, as well as facilitating regional and interstate commerce north to Wichita, Kansas and south to Fort Worth, Texas and beyond. The rural region's economy is driven by the agriculture and energy industries but is currently disadvantaged by the lack of an efficient north-south freight corridor.

This project will greatly reduce congestion through downtown Chickasha by constructing a new controlled-access highway alignment to help move heavy freight, agriculture, and energy sector traffic. The project includes the construction of more than eight miles of realigned US-81 between US-62 and SH-19, six new interchanges at major roads, and two grade-separated rail crossings. These upgrades will facilitate the safe and efficient movement of freight traffic, supporting regional and local economic activity while improving local access, pedestrian safety, air quality, commerce, and general mobility in Chickasha.

This project will improve travel for more than 16,000 vehicles per day on US-81, of which 17 percent is commercial truck traffic, and will have significant positive impacts in southwestern Oklahoma by providing for safer and more efficient travel.

I thank you in advance for your strong consideration of ODOT's application for this MPDG opportunity. Please contact Victor Sarmiento at victor_sarmiento@inchofe.senate.gov if you need any further assistance as you consider this important project.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator