



May 10, 2024

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

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Port Operators Association (AOPOA), I am writing to express our support for the joint application of Port Muskogee and Tulsa Ports for the 2024 Port Infrastructure Development Program grant application.

The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) plays a vital role in the regional and national economy and the Barge Safety & Efficiency Improvement Project will construct new mooring structures to replace existing obsolete anchors at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa and Port Muskogee, enabling safe harbor for mariners, increasing reliability of structures in the event of a flood, and ensuring the Oklahoma segment of the MKARNS can continue to support the over 22,000 full and part-time jobs it provides.

Additionally, the project will replace existing barge tie-down structures that were not designed for the type of major flood events experienced in the region in recent years, greatly reducing the risk of a barge becoming loose, which could result in damage to infrastructure in the waterway. These new mooring structures will also prepare ports for the forecasted increases in freight demand through the MKARNS segment in Oklahoma.

This project is a top priority for the MKARNS Oklahoma Segment. The proposed improvements to mooring structures at critical locations on the waterway are necessary to provide overall safety within the network and improve reliability of freight movement to meet the strategic goals of the region.

We strongly endorse the joint application of Port Muskogee and Tulsa Ports for the 2024 Port Infrastructure Development Program grant application.

Sincerely,

Bryan Day, President
Arkansas-Oklahoma Port Operators Association