



THE STATE CHAMBER

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

RE: Oklahoma Department of Transportation INFRA Application for US-81 Grady County project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to submit a letter of support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application for the US-81 realignment project in Grady County.

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 Oklahoma Department of Transportation would use these grant funds to advance construction of a new highway alignment to help move heavy freight, agriculture and energy sector traffic on US-81 out of the congested downtown area and onto a controlled-access four-lane highway on the west side of Chickasha (Population: More than 16,000). The project includes 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 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 rural region's economy is driven by the agriculture and energy industries, including wind energy, but is currently disadvantaged by the lack of an efficient north-south freight corridor. 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. If this ODOT project is selected for an INFRA grant, the funding will help improve travel for more than 16,000 vehicles per day on US-81, of which 17 percent is commercial truck traffic.

US-81 anchors the rural hubs of Enid, Kingfisher, El Reno, Chickasha and Duncan and also serves as a freight route to five major military facilities, as well as regional and interstate commerce with Wichita, Kansas; Fort Worth, Texas and beyond. This project is expected to have significant positive impacts in southwestern Oklahoma by providing for safer and more efficient travel and facilitating increased economic activity.

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 Warmingston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President & CEO
State Chamber of Oklahoma