



July 2, 2021

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

RE: Oklahoma Department of Transportation RAISE Grant

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Arkansas Oklahoma Port Operator's Association (AOPOA) I am writing this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) 2021 application submitted to U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Transportation Discretionary Grant Program.

The MKARNS Mooring Modernization Project (Project) will invest in mooring infrastructure at the Port of Muskogee, Tulsa Port of Catoosa and on the Grand River which will serve Oakley's Terminal Muskogee and Oakley's Port 33. These three ports total 3,600 acres of industrial park **employ nearly 9,000 workers**, and process nearly 5.5 million tons of cargo annually.

The Project will provide new mooring structures in the waterway that will **replace obsolete anchors**, which will enable safe harbor for mariners, increase reliability of structures in the event of a flood, and support efficient freight movement by waterway. Additionally, the Project will **expand much needed capacity** for vessels within the waterway and prepare ports for forecasted increases in freight demand through the MKARNS.

For many years, AOPOA has promoted the Arkansas River as a vital and reliable transportation link for regional, national, and international shipments. It stresses the attainment of an optimum level of operations through continued additions and improvements to the system's physical infrastructure, promotes a harmonic relationship among all primary beneficiaries of the system, encourages military use of the system, enhances an image of being an innovative and farsighted international navigable waterway as part of the fifth seacoast system.

The ODOT RAISE Grant Application sends a strong statement to freight shipping companies around the country that the State of Oklahoma is willing to invest in its infrastructure in areas where private sector needs exist, to help promote and sustain the Ports, that are critical to Oklahoma's economy.

The relationship between ODOT and the Oklahoma ports and terminal operators illustrate the kind of public-private partnership that can exist to advance the needs of commerce and Oklahoma's economy.

These infrastructure improvements are necessary to provide a competitive environment and funding for this infrastructure is a meaningful investment in the Nation's transportation infrastructure, worthy of a RAISE Transportation Grant.

Sincerely,



Greg Koenigseder, President
Arkansas Oklahoma Port Operator's Association