

MUSKOGEE CITY-COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY

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March 12, 2022

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

RE: Letter of Support for the U. S. Department of Transportation RAISE Grant application of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Muskogee City-County Port Authority, please consider this letter as support for the U. S. Department of Transportation RAISE Grant application of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Transportation serves an important role in rural America and that remains so in northeast Oklahoma. The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) is the country's most inland all-weather waterway, linking our home in Oklahoma to river cities and ports along the system and to international seaports around the world via the Gulf of Mexico. The Port of Muskogee (Port) is a vital part of the ongoing success of the MKARNS.

The key to long-term sustainable economic growth starts with investing in local infrastructure. We are pleased ODOT has plans to protect the public and private investment made in Muskogee and the vision to re-invest in our nation's infrastructure. The navigability and interstate commerce aspects of the Arkansas River make the Port, critical for transporting goods to local businesses and industry. This Mooring Modernization Project (Project) will replace existing structures which were not designed for the type of major flood events the region has experienced in recent years and enhance harbor safety by eliminating risk of loose barges and damage to infrastructure.

The MKARNS opened as an official navigable waterway over 50 years ago and near the same time mooring technology at the Port was implemented and has remained unchanged since its inception. Existing anchorage structures at the Port are limited and cannot support the incoming growth of barges and vessels that move freight. The Project will replace obsolete anchors and simultaneously expand

capacity for large and heavy vessels and better prepare the MKARNS to better address forecasted freight demand and movement by waterway.

This Project will greatly improve the region's long-term economic growth potential and provide a solid foundation for economic competitiveness in Muskogee. It will help to expand opportunities for the Port to grow and thrive.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimbra Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimbra Scott
Port Director