

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Oklahoma Department of Transportation BUILD grant application for US-281/Route 66 Bridgeport Bridge in Caddo and Canadian counties

Dear Secretary Chao,

We write in strong support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Investment (BUILD) discretionary grant application for the rehabilitation of the US-281/Route 66 Bridgeport Bridge (William H. Murray Bridge) in Caddo and Canadian counties.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation would use these grant funds to make major improvements to the historic, two-lane bridge. These improvements are both necessary and urgent for motorist safety, freight movement, economic growth and heritage tourism. While the project is still in the design and environmental review phase, we are pleased with the department's recent progress and consensus building efforts to balance historic preservation with the significant safety needs now present on the 86-year-old structure. This progress is the result of a new commitment by the department and Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz to re-evaluate projects like this one with a willingness to commit more state funding when necessary to better combine preservation and functionality.

The need to make urgent safety repairs cannot be ignored. The proposed \$35 million rehabilitation project aims to restore and slightly widen the Bridgeport Bridge to the point it can support legal truck loads along with passenger and tourist traffic. An emphasis will be placed on preserving historic elements including some original Route 66 pavement and the iconic 38 pony truss spans that are a visual highlight of the 17.7-mile-long Bridgeport Hill to Hydro Segment Historic District of Route 66, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

ODOT, the business community and local Route 66 preservation organizations share a common goal of making this bridge safe for travel for decades to come while keeping its historic integrity intact. BUILD grant funding for this project will help create and retain jobs, improve the quality of life in our state, and preserve the culture and tradition of the Route 66 Mother Road, which remains a vital resource to Oklahoma and the United States.

We appreciate your consideration of ODOT's application for this BUILD grant for the rehabilitation of the US-281/Route 66 Bridgeport Bridge (William H. Murray Bridge) in Caddo and Canadian counties. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Frank D. Lucas
Member of Congress