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November 6, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to write this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Bridge Investment Program. This project will provide crucial improvements to the Roosevelt Memorial Bridge on US-70 over Lake Texoma.

The Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA) is a regional council serving a ten-county region in southern Oklahoma. The SODA service area is encompassed by the tribal lands of the Chickasaw Nation on the west and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma on the east. The Roosevelt Bridge over Lake Texoma is a vital transportation link in southern Oklahoma between eastern and western Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation and the Choctaw Nation.

Originally built in 1942 under the Roosevelt Administration, the bridge has become functionally obsolete and is currently at-risk of falling into poor condition and becoming structurally deficient. The bridge carries 8,500 vehicles per day, and while each end of the bridge becomes a four-lane highway, the bridge continues to be two lanes with no shoulders which leads to bottlenecks and higher rates of collisions. ODOT anticipates traffic volumes to increase to over 27,000 per day by 2050 and the current bridge is simply insufficient to provide for existing and future traffic needs. Additionally, with the Roosevelt Bridge crossing one of Oklahoma's largest lakes, flooding has become all too common and forced past closures lasting several days.

Building upon prior investments by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), this project provides a safe crossing over Lake Texoma that meets all current design criteria, accommodates future traffic demands, and improves the efficiency and reliability of the movement of people and freight. Additional accommodations focus on increasing resiliency, providing new bicycle and pedestrian crossings, and use of innovative project delivery methods. The completion of this project will improve the National Highway System and ensure major freight routes continue to serve our nation's economy.

Please give ODOT's application for the Bridge Investment Program your strong consideration. Feel free to contact our offices if you need any further assistance as you consider this important proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven C. Mills".

Steven C. Mills, Ph.D.
Executive Director