



THE STATE CHAMBER

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

RE: Oklahoma Department of Transportation INFRA application for I-40 and Douglas Blvd. project in Oklahoma County

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 reconstruction and widening of a key commuter portion of I-40 in Oklahoma County. The 5-mile section of I-40 between Douglas Blvd. and I-240 in eastern Oklahoma County was put into service in 1963 at the birth of Oklahoma's interstate system. While it has received significant resurfacing projects and maintenance, this will be the first full lane reconstruction in its long lifespan.

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.

I-40 will be reconstructed and widened to improve safety, increase capacity and lessen congestion, which should help lower vehicle emissions by keeping traffic flowing. The \$117 million project also will address functionally obsolete bridges and add alternate modal options including a sidewalk at Douglas Blvd. to connect to an existing trails system in Midwest City. Additionally, the multi-phase project includes the elimination of conflict points at the Douglas Blvd. interchange by upgrading it to a Single Point Urban Interchange. This will be the fourth SPUI on Oklahoma's highway system when constructed.

This interchange serves as one of the main access points to Tinker Air Force Base, which is the second largest employer in the Oklahoma City metro area. This portion of the I-40 corridor also connects a fast-growing rural area to the metro, which lacks any real alternative routes for this level of traffic. Just to the east is the recently completed \$75 million I-40 widening between I-240 and Choctaw Rd. Connecting improvements to that newly widened section will be critical for ongoing traffic safety through the nation's crossroads to deliver goods across Oklahoma and nationally.

With the Oklahoma City metro area's low cost of living and Tinker Air Force Base expanding, I-40 will continue to play an increasingly important role in connecting outlying communities to these economic hubs. This project falls near the center of an overall, long-term plan to upgrade and modernize the interstate between the I-35/I-40/Fort Smith Jct. and Shawnee. These upgrades will improve safety and efficiency for more than 50,000 vehicles per day, of which 15 percent is commercial truck traffic. ODOT would use these grant funds to help move this critical project up in its schedule by five years.

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

President & CEO
State Chamber of Oklahoma