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Committees:
A&B General Government, Chair
Appropriations and Budget
Joint Committee Appropriations
Banking & Business
Utilities

HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

State of Oklahoma

April 21, 2020

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

RE: FY 2020 BUILD Grant Application, City of Altus, Oklahoma

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am pleased to submit a letter of support for the City of Altus Economic Loop Project application for a Fiscal Year 2020 ***Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)*** discretionary grant. This project addresses the BUILD program priorities by improving transportation infrastructure, safety, economic competitiveness, and quality of life in the rural community of Altus, Oklahoma.

For years, heavy traffic passing through Altus on US-283 has been the cause of congestion and accidents. Since 2016, the implementation of an alternative route for truck traffic has been part of the Oklahoma 5-Year Construction plan and the top priority for Jackson County. US-283, or Main Street as it is known through Altus, passes through the center of downtown which is the hub of financial and government activity for the county, as well as shopping and restaurants that serve the local population. On a daily basis, hundreds of trucks share the road with local traffic, creating delays and safety concerns.

The City of Altus seeks to improve freight travel times, increase freight reliability, and reduce accidents in the US-283 corridor. The Altus Economic Loop will provide a reliable alternative to US-283 located one mile to the west, with direct access to some of the region's most important production facilities. Jackson County is the top cotton producing county in Oklahoma, and Altus serves as an important production and distribution center.

The project will enhance agricultural manufacturing and processing in Altus and will encourage future development. A portion of this project is located in a designated federal Opportunity Zone; the goals of this BUILD project are aligned with other efforts to support economic growth.

Our nation's transportation infrastructure needs continued investment to remain economically competitive. I fully support the City of Altus in its endeavor and urge the USDOT to partner with them to move this project forward.

Please contact Glen Winters at 580.512.4262 or glen.winters@okfb.com if you need any further assistance. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Ortega".

Charles Ortega
State Representative
District 52

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