

May 1, 2020

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

RE: BUILD Grant Application - Jackson County and City of Altus for the Altus Economic Loop

Dear Secretary Chao,

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is pleased to submit a letter of support for the City of Altus as they pursue a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant to construct the Altus Economic Loop in Altus, OK.

The intersection of US-283 and US-62 lies in the heart of downtown Altus, and handles a mixture of local passenger traffic and heavy commercial trucks daily on both thoroughfares. The \$20.3 million economic loop would reroute this commercial traffic closer to industrial destinations on the west side of town. This project fulfills the core of the BUILD grant's purpose by improving the safety and quality of life for rural Americans and improving transportation infrastructure that, in turn, improves economic competitiveness. Some key elements of this project are:

- The loop project is set to reconstruct nearly six miles of city and county roads to handle the heavy truck traffic, increasing traffic safety and efficiency.
- A detention pond constructed on the route would alleviate existing flooding issues that prevent access to and close multiple businesses more than once a year.
- Producers Cooperative Oil Mill, which moved to Altus from Oklahoma City in 2015, is one of several agricultural processing facilities that handles a huge volume of agricultural materials and would be served by this project.
- Altus is home to Altus Air Force Base and several regional cotton processing facilities.

For these benefits to come to fruition, this project needs the boost a BUILD Grant provides. When you award the Altus Economic Loop a \$14 million BUILD Grant, you would bring the U.S. Department of Transportation on as a partner with three levels of government – state, county and city – that are ready to efficiently leverage state and local resources to do what otherwise could not be done for the benefit of those in Altus and the regional economy.

AEL could as easily stand for Altus's Economy Launcher as it does for Altus Economic Loop, as it primes this town to take off. I support the AEL and urge your consideration of this project that will create benefits at local, county, state and national levels.

Thank you for supporting this project and transportation in Oklahoma. Please contact us if you have questions regarding this important project.

Sincerely,



Tim J. Gatz
Executive Director
Secretary of Transportation

"The mission of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is to provide a safe, economical, and effective transportation network for the people, commerce and communities of Oklahoma."