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**OFFICE OF
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Mary E. Weaver
Commissioners Secretary

September 8, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Ellis County Commissioners are fully supportive of the Circuit Engineering District #8 application for Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant funding to replace seven bridges in six rural counties in northwestern Oklahoma. This grant will improve seven bridges that are currently in fair or poor condition, have insufficient widths, and are load posted, making them unsuitable to carry vehicles, school buses, or large agricultural equipment.

These bridges are either at or beyond their useful lives, having been constructed between 1915 and 1981. Like bridges across the country, this package of bridges is in need of significant investment to bring them out of a structurally deficient rating or prevent them from falling into that category. Investing today will prevent greater needed investments in the future, and will avoid costly detours should the bridges further deteriorate and require closure.

CED #8 has responsibility over 14 counties in one of the most rural parts of Oklahoma. With limited funding, the CED is unable to meet all the infrastructure needs within its boundaries. BIP funding would allow CED #8 to let a single contract for all seven bridges included in this request and take advantage of the cost and time savings of bundling.

This project will support critical state of good repair, safety, and mobility goals for Oklahoma's county bridge system as well as the residents and economy of the northwest region. Ellis County Commissioners strongly supports this application and requests your favorable review.

Sincerely,
Blake Suthers, Chairman
Board of Ellis County Commissioners

