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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

The Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA) strongly supports the BUILD Grant application for the *US-69 Rural Safety & Economic Vitality Project* in Atoka County, Oklahoma, submitted by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT). This project will deliver critical safety and mobility improvements along a vital segment of US-69 through the Town of Tushka, a key National Highway System (NHS) freight corridor serving southeastern Oklahoma.

US-69 is an essential north-south route for regional freight movement and local connectivity, carrying significant truck traffic and supporting economic activity throughout the region. The existing four-lane configuration through Tushka experiences congestion, limited turning capacity, and safety challenges that increase crash risk and hinder efficient freight flow. These conditions also restrict access for pedestrians and create mobility barriers for residents and businesses.

The proposed project seeks \$20 million in BUILD funding to upgrade approximately 2.5 miles of US-69 by widening the corridor from four to five lanes with a continuous center turn lane, constructing ADA-compliant sidewalks, improving intersections with dedicated turn bays, and enhancing drainage systems. These improvements will reduce congestion and improve traffic flow through safer lane configurations and dedicated turning movements, while enhancing safety for motorists and pedestrians by addressing crash-prone conditions and adding ADA-compliant facilities. In addition, the project will support economic vitality by improving freight efficiency and accommodating future growth in southeastern Oklahoma. Significantly, phased construction will maintain traffic and minimize disruption to local communities and businesses throughout the project.

This project strongly aligns with the BUILD merit criteria by improving safety, enhancing mobility and community connectivity, and supporting economic competitiveness. By investing in this corridor, the U.S. Department of Transportation will help ensure that southeastern Oklahoma remains connected, resilient, and prepared for future economic opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of ODOT's application for the *US-69 Rural Safety & Economic Vitality Project*. Please contact our offices if you need any additional information or assistance as you review this important proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven C. Mills". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven C. Mills  
Executive Director