



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

August 17, 2010

The Honorable Raymond H. LaHood  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: TIGER II funding for Claremore, Oklahoma's "Grade Separated Freight Railway Project"

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As President of Rogers State University, one of Oklahoma's primary higher education success stories, I am always interested in promoting opportunities that offer our university new and interesting community development activities. In addition, as a member of the community of Claremore, Oklahoma, I feel it is in my interest to seek out ways to promote issues and projects that positively affect our city.

In this instance, I urge you to select the subject project for funding based on the numerous community benefits it stands to provide. This project seeks to build a lengthy section of elevated freight railway by means of bridges and embankments to alleviate growing congestion, safety, and delay issues that impact quality of life issues for the community including our growing student population.

Due to the fact that the section of track in question bisects an entire community (Claremore, Oklahoma) and sits at the crossroads of three highways, Claremore's Main Street, and the intersection of two Class I railroads, the grade separation would be very beneficial in providing safer, smoother and quieter travel in and through the Claremore area. The proposed project will eliminate five at-grade crossings and a railroad crossing diamond and in turn offer tremendous benefits to bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as to auto, truck and freight train users.

As I am concerned with the students attending the university, issues such as safety, air quality, and mobility are all relevant to my interests. The proposed project would eliminate multiple grade crossings, add sidewalks to the new underpasses, and reduce emissions by separating the freight rail traffic from the auto and pedestrian traffic. Students would have greater means to traverse the city on foot or bicycle, breath cleaner air, and more efficiently travel from the university to various locations across the city.

Rogers State University also runs an Economic and Community Development Program (known as the Innovation Center) stands ready, willing and able to assist as this project unfolds. We anticipate that jobs would be created during and as a result of the project, new business sites will develop, and workforce training and re-tooling will be required. Our Innovation Center will be happy to serve as a community partner by meeting educational needs related to entrepreneurship, workforce and economic development.

I appreciate your dedication and hope you will select this meritorious project for funding.

Sincerely,

Larry Rice