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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS

June 11, 2009

U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590
ATTN: TIGER Grants Program Manager

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Member of Congress, I am writing in support of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant application submitted by the Arkansas and Oklahoma Railroad Company (AOK). This grant has been officially submitted so this organization can help create and save jobs located across the west to east corridor which runs from Oklahoma City to Arkansas.

The rail line operated by AOK extending from Shawnee, Oklahoma to Oklahoma City has experienced significant seasonal washout and erosion from the North Canadian River for many years. This situation causes the line to close for weeks at a time, resulting losses of millions of dollars for local businesses. A total of seven companies in Shawnee alone rely on the rail line, while a total of over 1600 jobs across central and southeastern Oklahoma are dependent on the rail line. Conservative estimates place the total annual salaries of these jobs at \$38,000,000. Given the current recession, none of the businesses which are dependent upon the rail service can afford for the line to be out of commission for any length of time. The threat of future washouts literally puts thousands jobs and millions of dollars at stake.

Additionally, AOK is currently working to re-open the line that runs from Shawnee, Oklahoma to McAlester, Oklahoma. Combined with the line from Shawnee to Oklahoma City, this new development will create a 194 mile freight transportation system, giving the region five class one railroad connections, while further providing regional shippers more options to lower their freight costs.

To be certain much of the rail line provides quality jobs for the most impoverished region of Oklahoma. The average median income for the 14 counties in southeastern Oklahoma is \$25,032. The types of jobs created by the existence of a functioning rail line in this area are high paying positions which provide substantial benefits to the citizens of this economically disadvantaged region.

In my considered opinion, the Arkansas and Oklahoma Railroad Company has an urgent need for these funds. I strongly feel it is imperative AOK Railroad be granted the financial means provided by this program to address the washout of the rail in their service region.

Thank you for your consideration,



Mary Fallin

Member of Congress