

IOWA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

800 Lincoln Way | Ames, IA 50010

April 24, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to extend my support for the BUILD grant proposal to fund the Oskaloosa Bypass Planning Study focused on improving safety and efficiency for the region. This area is home to a high concentration of advanced manufacturing industries, 75 percent of whom export, and the improved connectivity is vital to their ability to receive raw materials and ship finished products.

A strong transportation network is imperative to our success. Completing the planning study to develop bypasses along the east side of the City of Oskaloosa and Industrial Park will ensure safer, more efficient freight movement. The study will provide environmental, crash and traffic data and will result in defining route alternatives and designs so local leaders are able to move the improvements forward.

The BUILD-supported planning effort will incorporate industry growth projections to evaluate the safety and capacity of the corridor for the long-term. The new design will provide a route capable of expanding the current Industrial Park into a certified site and divert freight transport currently traveling through the downtown and residential areas.

The study effort is part of the transfer of jurisdiction for the NW bypass of US 63 that will improve response times for emergency vehicles to essential services, provide a safer route for students from William Penn University, and improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

The 2019 Existing Business and Industry survey shows 95 percent of Mahaska area businesses plan to introduce new products, expand their physical presence and increase their workforce. Many of the industries located in the area are hometown headquarter facilities which contributes to the stability of the economy. Infrastructure capable of serving the needs of these industries is key to their future growth.

I am pleased to support the City of Oskaloosa and Mahaska County's BUILD Grant application for the Oskaloosa Bypass Planning Study. This project is important to the economic vitality of the region; it will improve the quality of life and allow the City and Mahaska County to improve the condition of key infrastructure.

Sincerely,


Tom Rielly, Chairman
Iowa Department of Transportation Commission