

May 15, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), I am writing to you in support of a BUILD grant proposal to fund the Oskaloosa Bypass Planning Study. This proposal, submitted through a partnership of the City of Oskaloosa and Mahaska County, is focused on moving the community toward a safer, more efficient connection to the Oskaloosa Industrial Park, as well as creating a certified site for the community.

The IEDA's mission is to strengthen the economic and community vitality of communities across our state. Projects such as this one are instrumental in helping us achieve our state's economic development goals. Mahaska County is a hub for advanced manufacturing, which employs about 24 percent of the workforce. Seventy-five percent of area industries are exporters, according to the Synchronist survey report. In addition, 95 percent of area businesses plan to introduce new products, expand their physical presence and increase their workforce. Many area industries are headquarter facilities that contribute to the stability of the economy. Safe, efficient connectivity is vital to their ability to receive raw materials and ship finished products, and infrastructure capable of serving their needs is key to future growth.

Once again, it is a pleasure to submit this letter in support of the City of Oskaloosa and Mahaska County's BUILD grant application, and I urge you to consider approval. This project is important to the economic vitality of the region, will improve quality of life, and will allow the city and county to improve the condition of key infrastructure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Debi V. Durham  
Director