

**CITY OF CLAREMORE
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**MICKEY PERRY
CHIEF OF POLICE**

200 W. FIRST ST. • CLAREMORE, OK 74017
(918) 341-1212 • FAX (918) 341-1648

**STAN BROWN
ASSISTANT CHIEF**

August 4, 2010

Gary Ridley
Secretary of Transportation
Oklahoma Department of Transportation
200 N/E 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3204

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AUG 06 2010

PLANNING & RESEARCH
DIVISION

Re: Support of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Separation Project in
Claremore, Oklahoma.

Dear Secretary Ridley,

As Claremore Chief of Police and 41 year law enforcement officer, I am writing to express my support for the proposed Rail Grade Separation project in Claremore. This project will be a great asset to public safety and improved quality of life for the people of Claremore.

Over the past fifteen years, the Claremore Police Department has investigated 19 serious accidents involving pedestrians and/or personal vehicles colliding with trains.

Claremore has a very high volume of traffic due in part to three state highways (88, 20, & 66) intersecting within the city. In addition, Claremore has a second major railroad, the Union Pacific, which crosses the BNSF tracks not far from the State Highways in the middle of town.

As you know, Claremore is also the Rogers county seat, a college town, and tourist destination. Two significant assets to the local economy; the Port of Catoosa and a Public Service power plant, contribute to the traffic volume as well. I cannot stress enough that even though Claremore is a relatively small community, it has a high volume of freight, passenger, and tourist traffic passing through each day. While we value the related economic energy and activity, the at-grade crossings are a serious safety concern.

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Two of Claremore's four elementary schools are separated from the neighborhoods that they serve by a rail/highway crossing, requiring automobile and school bus drivers to frequently negotiate the tracks in order to reach the schools.


Emergency vehicles are inhibited by trains more often than not. Police, fire and ambulance services are regularly delayed by railroad traffic making it increasingly difficult to navigate safely and quickly when responding to emergency calls.

A grade separation would substantially alleviate the problems mentioned above, and also improve the neighborhood and community development opportunities in our area.

As a law enforcement officer and citizen of Claremore, I am confident that the grade separation project would benefit all the citizens of Rogers County. It will not only enhance the safety, but also improve the quality of life. I wholeheartedly endorse this project.

Your support is greatly appreciated. Feel free to call me at (918) 343-1212 if you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,


Mickey Perry
Chief of Police

MP/js