

Oklahoma State Senate

Sean Burrage
Senator District 2
Assistant Democratic Leader



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Health and Human Resources - Vice Chair
Business and Labor
Appropriations / Budget Subcommittee on
Health and Human Services
Transportation
Veterans and Military Affairs

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: Support for TIGER II funding for Claremore, Oklahoma: Grade-Separated Freight Railway Project

Dear Secretary LaHood,

As both a State Senator representing Claremore, Oklahoma, and a member of the State of Oklahoma Transportation Committee, I urge your selection of the TIGER II application being submitted by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation/State of Oklahoma. This project seeks funding to install a grade-separated freight railway through Claremore, Oklahoma, which stands to offer significant benefits to the community, state, and nation.

The section of track proposed for the grade separation sits at the crossroads of three highways, Claremore's Main Street, and the intersection of two Class I railroads. The elimination of at-grade crossings and a railroad crossing diamond would have a tremendous positive impact on pedestrian, auto, truck and train flows as analyzed and discussed in the accompanying application. Currently, the City of Claremore is bisected by an active BNSF freight line averaging 25 trains daily which then also intersects, by means of a crossing diamond with another Class I railroad, the Union Pacific Railroad Company which runs approximately 20 trains daily. The project at hand would elevate the BNSF track through the city, thus resulting in the elimination of five at-grade crossings as well as the interchange with the UP Railroad Company. As the auto-truck ADT for the affected roadways in this city is approximately 50,000, it is readily apparent that separating the various transportation corridors will significantly reduce congestion and improve safety.

This project includes the addition of new sidewalks at all the proposed grade separations, improves access to a tract of land for retail business opportunities, reduces emissions and improves air quality through elimination of train/truck and auto delays. Above all, this project enhances safety by not only separating forms of transportation but allowing free flow of emergency vehicles and school buses by eliminating the current bisection which often results in long detours as vehicles are forced to wait for the passing of long freight trains.

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In closing, I urge you to provide the funding needed to complete this project, and I point out that thanks to the multi-party nature of this project (City of Claremore, State of Oklahoma, ODOT, BNSF Railway Company), we can provide approximately 70% of the entire budget—far more than the minimum 20% required.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Burrage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

SEAN BURRAGE
State Senator – District 2

SB:dg