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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2506

November 8, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my interest in the 2017 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application for the project to replace the Buck O'Neil Bridge which is a major bridge over the Missouri River in the Kansas City region connecting the downtown to the Northland. The City of Kansas City is requesting \$60 million in INFRA grant funding toward the completion of the project.

The current Buck O'Neil Bridge is an important connection for my constituents with 40,000 vehicles crossing between the northern Kansas City suburbs and the downtown area each day as well as serving as the predominant connection between the Charles B. Wheeler Downtown Airport and Kansas City. The current bridge is 61-years-old and slated for major repairs and a two-year closure, but the repairs would only extend the life of the bridge another 20 years and not sufficiently meet the needs of my constituents and the future of a rapidly growing Kansas City region.

Earlier this year, the Department of Transportation (DOT) announced the INFRA discretionary grant program through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in the Federal Register on June 29. The INFRA program made approximately \$1.5 billion available as a result of Fiscal Year 2017 and 2018 funding for the program provided by Congress.

As you know, the INFRA program was first authorized as part of the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act* in 2015 to provide dedicated, discretionary funding for projects that address critical issues facing our nation's highways and bridges. INFRA grants support the Federal Government's commitment to fixing our nation's crumbling infrastructure by creating opportunities for all levels of government and the private sector to fund infrastructure, using innovative approaches to improve the necessary processes for building significant projects, and increasing accountability for the projects that are built.

Thank you for your consideration of the INFRA grant application for the Buck O'Neil Bridge Replacement project and for your leadership for economic growth through transportation investments that support our nation's freight industry. Should you have any questions or require additional information please contact Josh Hurlbert of my staff at Josh.Hurlbert@mail.house.gov or 816-792-3976.

Sincerely,



Sam Graves
Member of Congress