

May 20, 2021

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Inhofe:

We, the undersigned organizations, support the designation of as U.S. Highway 412 corridor as a future interstate from I-35 in Noble County, Oklahoma to I-49 in Springdale, Arkansas. The multi-state regions of Northeast Oklahoma and Northwest Arkansas share historic, geographic, and economic interests and a future interstate designation will improve economic development opportunities for both regions while providing the State DOTs with sufficient time to fully upgrade the corridor to Interstate standards.

As you know, an interstate highway corridor attracts new businesses, improve safety along the corridor, enhance freight mobility, reduce travel times, and connect rural and urban communities. A significant portion of this route was designed and constructed to Interstate standards, and this proposal would directly connect three key Interstate freight corridors in the heartland of America: I-35, I-44, and I-49. The existing US-412 route directly serves major inland ports, including the Tulsa Ports of Catoosa and Inola and Oakley's Port 33 on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. An interstate designation on this route also improves access to the Tulsa International Airport and Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, and will improve supply chain connectivity for major retail and industrial employers in the region, including Walmart, and numerous energy and aerospace companies.

Most major metropolitan areas across the Nation typically have two or three Interstate highways connecting their region. However, both the Tulsa Metropolitan Statistical Area and the Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Statistical Area are only currently served by one Interstate highway, I-44 and I-49, respectively. Of the 60 largest metropolitan statistical areas in the Nation, Tulsa, a region with one million residents, remains virtually alone as a non-coastal metropolitan region of its size with only one current or future Interstate highway connection. Additionally, the Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Area, with over 500,000 in population, is among the Nation's most rapidly growing regions as well.

We look forward to working with you to improve transportation access and mobility in our region, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Tim J Gatz
Secretary of Transportation
Oklahoma Department of Transportation



Lorie Tudor
Director
Arkansas Department of Transportation

cc: The Honorable Tom Carper, Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Committee on Environment and Public Works