

AMY KLOBUCHAR
MINNESOTA

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY

COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

JUDICIARY

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 14, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Kandiyohi County, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program. If awarded, funding would support the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project, which would address critical safety concerns, enhance connectivity, boost mobility, and improve the quality of life for residents and commuters in the region.

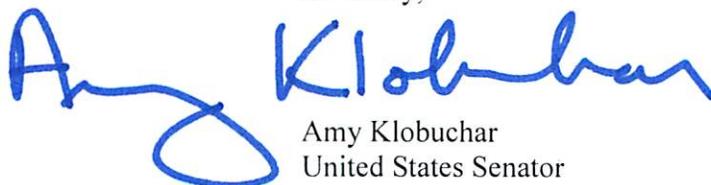
Located in central Minnesota, the city of Willmar is one of the fastest growing communities in rural Minnesota. In order to accommodate the significant growth and rapid development in the region, Kandiyohi County is actively addressing the growing transportation and infrastructure needs in the area by upgrading key components of the regional transportation network. This includes improving multimodal access to employment, housing; and commercial, retail, and industrial centers in the region, which is why upgrades need to be made to County Road 55 (CSAH 55) in Willmar.

Currently, County Road 55 near Minnesota Highway 23 in Willmar is an undivided, two-lane rural highway. Commuters and residents who rely CSAH 55 currently have to cross an at-grade highway and rail crossing where the roadway bisects the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad. This stretch of roadway has created significant safety concerns, accessibility and mobility issues, and has adversely impacted economic development in the region.

Funding from the Federal Railroad Administration would help replace the existing at-grade crossing of the BNSF Railroad at CSAH 55 in Willmar and convert it into a bridge over the existing railroad tracks. In addition, this project would support efforts to reconstruct a one mile stretch of CSAH 55. Completing this project would not only significantly enhance safety and connectivity, but it would also improve mobility, reduce congestion, support the regional economy and supply chain, and minimize the impacts of freight movement on local communities.

Again, I support Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program. If you have any questions, please contact Rommel Lee in my Minnesota office at (612) 727-5220 or by email at Rommel_Lee@Klobuchar.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2307

November 21, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. The CRISI funding would construct an overpass to eliminate two at-grade BNSF highway-rail crossings and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on County Road 55.

This project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns on the urban fringe of the growing City of Willmar, MN, accelerates economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park, improves multimodal access to employment areas, single and multi-family housing, and places of commerce and assembly. This project eliminates an at-grade highway/rail crossing and realigns roadways to more efficiently access highways connecting regional and national shippers. The project significantly improves multi-modal access to both existing and future transit opportunities along the adjacent corridors and enhances mobility for all users.

Infrastructure improvements in the Willmar area are critically needed so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities may access jobs, healthcare, and housing. The Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project significantly improves interregional corridor connections by reestablishing the local roadway network and access to several suburban, exurban, and rural communities in, or adjacent to, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metropolitan Area.

I support Kandiyohi County's application for funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full and fair consideration, consistent with all applicable rules and regulations. If I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Sincerely,



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress

Dave Baker
State Representative

Kandiyohi County – 17B



Minnesota
House of
Representatives

November 14, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

The Project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns on the urban fringe of the growing city of Willmar, MN, accelerates economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park, reduces inequity by improving multimodal access to employment areas, single and multi-family housing, and places of commerce and assembly. The project will improve regional railroad operations, reduce the number of traffic delays at blocked at-grade highway-rail crossing, and realign roadways to improve access and efficiency for regional and national shippers. Supporting this effort improves multimodal access and enhances mobility for all users and is essential so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities may access jobs, healthcare, and housing.

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I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at (651) 296-6206 or rep.dave.baker@house.mn

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Dave Baker.

Dave Baker
State Representative
District 17B

November 21, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at (651) 296-4918 or sen.andrew.lang@senate.mn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Lang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Lang
Minnesota State Senator
Senate District 17



CITY ADMINISTRATOR

November 29, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

City Office Building
333 SW 6th Street
Box 755
Willmar, Minnesota 56201
320-235-4913
FAX: 320-235-4917
www.willmarmn.gov

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

In addition to sustainability and equity advancements, the project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns on the urban fringe of the growing City of Willmar, MN, accelerates economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park, reduces inequity by improving multimodal access to employment areas, single and multi-family housing, and places of commerce and assembly. This project eliminates an at-grade highway/rail crossing and realigns roadways to more efficiently access highways connecting regional and national shippers. The project significantly improves multi-modal access to both existing and future transit opportunities along the adjacent corridors and enhances mobility for all users.

Infrastructure improvements in the Willmar area are critically needed so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities may access jobs, healthcare, and housing. The Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project significantly improves interregional corridor connections by reestablishing the local roadway network and access to several suburban, exurban, and rural communities in, or adjacent to, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metropolitan Area.

I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at City of Willmar, lvaliant@willmarmn.gov or 320-214-5160

Sincerely,

Leslie M. Valiant
Willmar City Administration
320.214.5160 (office)
320.979.0818 (cell)



City of Granite Falls

641 Prentice Street
Granite Falls, MN 56241-1598
Phone (320) 564-3011 FAX (320) 564-3013
7-1-1 or 1-800-627-3529 Voice, TTY, ASCII
www.granitefalls.com

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

November 22, 2022

RE: Letter of support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grants program. If awarded, the CRISI funding would construct an overpass to eliminate two at grade BNSF highway-rail crossings and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 55.

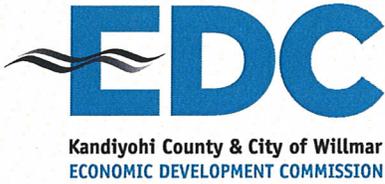
This project serves a wide area of Southwestern and West Central Minnesota, and directly impacts travelers from my city, which is 38 miles away on state highway 23, as well as residents from other cities in our area that travel to Willmar, which is our region's business center. Improving safety and mobility at this busy railroad and highway corridor is of utmost importance to our region and aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns at the edge of the growing city of Willmar.

This project will help accelerate economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park by eliminating an at-grade highway-rail crossing and realigning roadways that more efficiently access highways connecting area, regional and national shippers.

Again, I wholeheartedly support Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at smiglewski@mchsi.com.

Sincerely,


Dave Smiglewski
Mayor, City of Granite Falls



November 23, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

In addition to sustainability and equity advancements, the project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals, as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns on the urban fringe of the growing City of Willmar, MN, accelerates economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park, reduces inequity by improving multimodal access to employment areas, single and multi-family housing, and places of commerce and assembly. This project eliminates an at-grade highway/rail crossing and realigns roadways to more efficiently access highways connecting regional and national shippers. The project significantly improves multi-modal access to both existing and future transit opportunities along the adjacent corridors and enhances mobility for all users.

Infrastructure improvements in the Willmar area are critically needed so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes and abilities may access jobs, healthcare and housing. The Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project significantly improves interregional corridor connections by reestablishing the local roadway network and access to several suburban, exurban and rural communities in, or adjacent to, the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area.

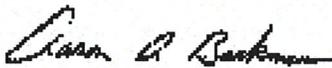
The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) has long championed the need for transportation infrastructure improvements in Willmar and throughout the county to enhance our efforts for economic growth and quality jobs. This project improves access, mobility and safety to Willmar Industrial Park businesses, such as the new FedEx Distribution Center and the planned Realm 5 Logistics Park.

www.kandiyohi.com | 320.235.7370 | 866.665.4556 | 222 20th Street SE | P.O. Box 1783 | Willmar, MN 56201

Pete Buttigieg
September 7, 2022
Page 2

I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at 320-235-7370, and my email address is aaron@kandiyohi.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron A. Backman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Aaron A. Backman
Executive Director
Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar
Economic Development Commission



WILLMAR

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR**

**333 SW 6TH ST
WILLMAR, MN 56201
320-235-4202
FAX 320-235-4917**

November 23, 2022

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55
Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

The Willmar Municipal Airport is due west of the proposed CSAH 55 rebuild project on State Highway 40. The bridge over the RR tracks from the south would make a connection from State Highway 23 and 12 to State Highway 40. This would allow for more efficient and safe access for airport users and transport businesses. The connection can be used as a marketing and business attraction/retention tool to grow the Airport as the asset it is to the City of Willmar and the region.

Transportation from West U.S. Highway 12 currently travels through the downtown area which is slow due to several stop lights. Some truck drivers take an alternative route exiting U.S. Highway 12 at County Road 5 on the west side of the City and then turn east on County Road 15 which passes residential areas and two schools. This route requires travel through an overly congested intersection at U.S. Highway 71.

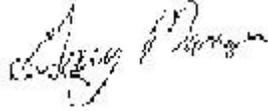
The proposed project creates a safe and accessible route to the south using CSAH 55 as a means to avoid travel through Willmar. Re-entering U.S. Highway 12 East would also be easier for drivers as the amount of traffic coming from the west at the entry point will be decreased as a result of the completed bypass.

I believe this project will also increase safety for drivers and for those residing, working or visiting the City of Willmar. It will also allow for another connection to the west to the Airport to increase access and visibility to the Willmar Municipal Airport.

Please consider the request for railroad crossing elimination grant funds submitted by Kandiyohi County in order to complete the bypass around the City of Willmar.

Sincerely,

CITY OF WILLMAR

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Manzer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gary Manzer
Public Works Director



www.haugimp.com

November 21st, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program: Willmar, Minnesota Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County’s application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of the CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

Haug Implement of Willmar, Minnesota has been serving area agriculture producers for over 104 years. I have heard and observed the negative impacts of traveling the current U.S. Highway 12 route through Willmar for those hauling agriculture products and the businesses serving agriculture producers.

Transportation from east and west U.S. Highway 12 currently travels through the downtown area which is slow due to city speed limits and several stop lights. Some truck drivers take an alternative route exiting U.S. Highway 12 at County Road 5 on the west side of the city and then turning east on County Road 15 which passes schools, churches, businesses, and residential areas. This route requires travel through an overly congested intersection at U.S. Highway 71. This route is also reversed when traffic moves from east to west.

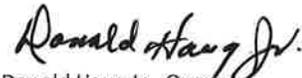
Quoting a study done in 1972 by the Minnesota Department of Highways proposing changes in Highway 12, 23, and 71, *“the purpose of the project is to relieve the present traffic congestion on the existing T.H. routes that traverse through the business and residential streets of Willmar. The diversion of the through traffic to by-pass the city will reduce the problems of safety, congestion, noise, and odors now present in the retail and residential areas. The through traveler whose destination is not the City of Willmar will also drive positive benefits in reduced travel time, reduced frustration of city traffic driving and greater safety.”*

This by-pass has only partially completed over the last 50 plus years. We are now in the position and have the opportunity to re-establish the proposal by utilizing CSAH 55 to access the Highway 23/71 by-pass around the City. This plan would give both truck and consumer traffic a safe passage as they travel from the east or the west on U.S. Highway 12.

Agriculture producers, farm equipment haulers, and agriculture service providers would save valuable work time with a by-pass around the City of Willmar. I believe this project will also increase safety for drivers and for those residing, working, or visiting the City of Willmar.

I support Kandiyohi County’s application for the funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at mail@haugimp.com, cell phone 320-905-8100 (or) 320-235-8115.

Sincerely,


Donald Haug Jr., Owner
Haug Implement Company

3593 E Hwy 12 - PO Box 1055
Willmar, MN 56201
320-235-8115



62105 MN Hwy 24 - PO Box 127
Litchfield, MN 55355
320-693-2438



November 30, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

The Project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns on the urban fringe of the growing city of Willmar, MN, accelerates economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park, reduces inequity by improving multimodal access to employment areas, single and multi-family housing, and places of commerce and assembly. The project will improve regional railroad operations, reduce the number of traffic delays at the blocked at-grade highway-rail crossing, and realign roadways to improve access and efficiency for regional and national shippers. Supporting this effort improves multimodal access and enhances mobility for all users and is essential so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities may access jobs, healthcare, and housing.

Dooley's Petroleum Inc. employs 300 individuals and hauls and distributes over 400,000,000 gallons of petroleum products each year. The project stated above would improve access, and efficiency and eliminate safety issues on County Road 55. I support Kandiyohi County's application for funding the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at (320) 235-5200.

Sincerely,
Randy Dooley
CEO

Vaxxinoa US (Admin)

1801 Biotech Avenue NE
Willmar, MN 56201

Office: (844) SRP-VAXX
(320) 222-9822
Fax: (320) 222-9821

Vaxxinoa US Production

360 NW 45th Street
Willmar, MN 56201

Office: (844) SRP-VAXX
(320) 222-9822
Fax: (320) 222-9823



November 30, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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As a leading Animal Health company located in Willmar, MN and Worthington, MN we continue to see rapid growth and demand for our innovative products for use in poultry, cattle, and swine production. The rapid economic growth of Kandiyohi County along with the growth of our business we see this project as mutually beneficial for years to come. I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at Brian.Harberts@vaxxinoa.com or 320-262-5824.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Harberts", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Brian Harberts
Finance Director
Vaxxinoa US and Newport Laboratories, Inc.

November 29, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

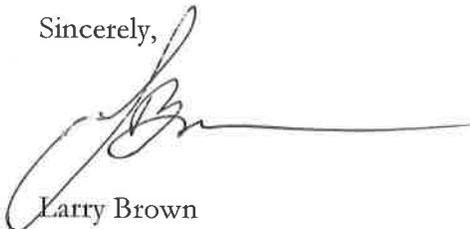
Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at 320-212-8896.

Sincerely,



Larry Brown
Director of Logistics
Hormel Foods

November 28, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Kandiyohi County CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project (Willmar, MN)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of Kandiyohi County's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate final design and construction activities under Track 3 for the CSAH 55 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project. The project will construct an overpass to eliminate the current at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) highway-rail crossing and reconstruct approximately one mile of rural two-lane undivided highway on CSAH 55.

In addition to sustainability and equity advancements, the project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical at-grade rail crossing safety concerns on the urban fringe of the growing City of Willmar, MN, accelerates economic development of the region through improved connections to the expanding Willmar Industrial Park, reduces inequity by improving multimodal access to employment areas, single and multi-family housing, and places of commerce and assembly. This project eliminates an at-grade highway/rail crossing and realigns roadways to more efficiently access highways connecting regional and national shippers. The project significantly improves multi-modal access to both existing and future transit opportunities along the adjacent corridors and enhances mobility for all users.

Infrastructure improvements in the Willmar area are critically needed so residents and visitors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities may access jobs, healthcare, and housing. The Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project significantly improves interregional corridor connections by reestablishing the local roadway network and access to several suburban, exurban, and rural communities in, or adjacent to, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metropolitan Area.

I support Kandiyohi County's application for the funding of the Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Elimination Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region. Please give this proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at bpattison@wcsteel.com or 320-214-5282.

Sincerely,



William Pattison
Director of Business Development
West Central Steel, Inc.

November 23, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

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Here at First District Association, we have around 20 trucks of milk that transport 1 million pounds of milk, every day through the city of Willmar to our milk processing plant in Litchfield. This infrastructure improvement would be greatly beneficial to not only our milk haulers, but also our farmers that live in the area. This would allow them to pass around Willmar in a much safer way. It would also be safer for the citizens of Willmar to have these trucks avoid going through the heart of Willmar on roads that are very narrow and curvy.

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Sincerely,



Patti Schaefer
Director of Milk Marketing
First District Association