



Red Lake Department of Public Safety

Law Enforcement Services

January 23, 2024

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 2024 RAISE Grant Program: Walking Shield Road Extension and Minnesota Highway 1 Improvements (Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant. The RAISE funding will facilitate the completion of the long-planned rehabilitation of nearly four miles of existing pavement along Walking Shield Road and 1.2 miles of pavement along Minnesota Highway 1 (MN 1) on the Red Lake Reservation and the construction of nearly ten miles of a shared use path along this vital corridor near Redby, Minnesota (census designated place). The Project will also include the construction of safer intersections, pavement markings, the addition of drainage improvements, and the elimination of deficient horizontal curves.

The Project aligns with USDOT's strategic goals as it addresses critical safety concerns on the reservation and improves safety, promotes environmental sustainability, improves quality of life, improves mobility and community connectivity, encourages economic competitiveness and opportunity, facilitates a state of good repair, strengthens partnerships and collaboration, and leads to innovation through both local and regional impacts. Construction of the extended Walking Shield Road will spur housing development and future roadway connections, as well as significantly improve mobility for all users and abilities whether walking, rolling, bicycling, taking transit, and driving on the Red Lake Reservation.

The Red Lake Tribal Police Department patrols 1,259 square miles, ensuring that all citizens and Tribal roadways are safe. The Police Department is in support of this expansion plan to create a new road or an alternate route that would lead into the Redby District. Currently, if an accident were to occur or road damage repairs to the main highway, all transportation shuts down on the highway and both the Ponemah & Redby Districts have limited access. The shutdown of this main road creates an unsafe environment when Police are needed to respond to emergency situations on the reservation.

In addition, when this stretch of highway shuts down Police and citizens have to be sent to a different route off the reservation and travel further away in order to make it to the areas of Redby or Ponemah. This new expansion to the road would have a positive impact to the transportation issues and emergency response of Police, Ambulance and Fire to serious calls in the future.

The completion of the shared use path and road improvements along the project corridor will strengthen our system of transport and contribute to growth in our region, including the anticipated growth of The Red Lake Tribal Police Department itself.

I support the Tribe's application for the funding of the Walking Shield Road Extension and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2024 RAISE Discretionary Grant proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at 218-679-3313.

Sincerely,

Dana Joseph Lyons Jr.
Captain of Police
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