

Appendix B:

Letters of Support

OTO Traffic Incident Management Committee

Springfield-Branson National Airport

Mid-America Freight Coalition

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Bass Pro Shops

John Deere

Central States Industrial Equipment and Services

Kraft Heinz

Missouri State Highway Patrol



Traffic Incident Management

Emergency Medical - Fire - Law Enforcement



Traffic Operations - Media - Towing & Recovery
Ozarks Transportation Organization

February 14, 2020

Traffic Incident Management Committee
Ozarks Transportation Organization
2208 W. Chesterfield Blvd., Suite 101
Springfield, MO 65807

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

RE: INFRA Grant for the Expansion of Interstate 44 in Springfield, MO

Dear Secretary Chao:

The *Ozarks Transportation Organization's* Traffic Incident Management (TIM) committee would like to express its support for MoDOT's INFRA application to expand Interstate 44 between West Bypass and US 65. The TIM committee advocates for quick clearance and responder safety in the Springfield Area. The committee accomplishes this by building trust amongst responder groups and regularly reviewing major incidents.

Interstate 44 is known to experience the greatest hours of delay resulting from accidents in the region. The queues during an accident increase the risk of secondary accidents. Responders face the increased risk of injury as they condense their response activity space so traffic lanes can be reopened. An expanded I-44 would result in shorter queues and responders would have less exposure as they are able to maintain a more appropriately sized response activity space.

According to the FHWA, twenty percent of all crashes are considered secondary crashes, crashes due to hazardous roadway conditions resulting from another incident¹. The high volumes of traffic along I-44 and the limited space within responders can work results in large traffic queues increases the risk for major incidents as high-speed traffic approaches the queue.

Eight responders have been struck and killed in the US during the first month of 2020². Four of the eight deaths have happened to responders working crash scenes. The limited roadway capacity along I-44 through Springfield means responders are under pressure to condense size of their activity area so at least one lane of I-44 can remain open. The pressure to ensure one lane stays open increases the

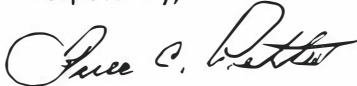
¹ https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/aboutus/one_pagers/tim.htm, 02/05/2020

² <https://www.respondersafety.com/Struck-By-Incidents/Yearly-Fatality-Reports.aspx>, 02/05/2020

likelihood of a responders getting injured. Additional roadway capacity along I-44 will make it easier to ensure one lane stays open and ensure responders have an adequately sized activity area. It will also mean two lanes could be open to traffic once it is safe to reduce the size of the responders' activity area.

We strongly support MoDOT's INFRA application to expand I-44. The construction of additional travel lanes on I-44 would reduce traffic queues, secondary incidents and risk to responders. On behalf of the Ozarks Transportation Organization's Traffic Incident Committee, I strongly urge you to consider funding this application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce C. Pettus".

Bruce C. Pettus

Chair, OTO Traffic Incident Management Committee
District Incident Management Coordinator, MoDOT



February 12, 2020

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

**RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal**

Dear Secretary Chao:

This letter is for the Springfield-Branson National Airport (SGF) to go on record supporting the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant proposal submitted by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). If granted, federal funding would be used to help offset the cost of widening Interstate-44 through Springfield, Missouri (Greene County), which would improve safety and the economic vitality of our region. I strongly encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

SGF Airport is located on the Northwest corner of the Springfield metropolitan area with direct access to I-44 through the Chestnut Expressway Interchange. We are classified by the Federal Aviation Administration as a Small Hub Commercial Service Airport and passenger numbers have grown 60% in five years to well over one million annually. We are served by four airlines with non-stop service to 12 cities, including an average 30 daily flights to six major airline hub airports. Our customer base extends far beyond Springfield city limits and I-44 is a major corridor used by departing and arriving passengers.

SGF Airport has nightly UPS and FedEx flights that transported nearly 33 million pounds of air cargo in 2019. Much of this freight was loaded on trucks for delivery to/from its destination on an already overcrowded I-44. In fact, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic and the average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000. SGF Airport also operates the Southwest Missouri Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ #225), which has the largest geographic area and one of only three FTZs in Missouri covering 23 Counties. Current FTZ users are General Dynamics and Newell Brands with combined shipments of over 10,000 truck containers per year. It is critical this freight continue to flow efficiently even with growing truck traffic.

The two key reasons I-44 improvements are needed are to improve safety and maintain economic vitality for our region. Targeted investment on the I-44 corridor in Springfield by USDOT will bring far-reaching benefits to airport users, our residents (both rural and urban), and freight moving through our region.

I respectfully request your favorable consideration of MoDOT's application for this important project.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Weiler, AAE
Director of Aviation



DEPARTMENT OF
**Civil and
Environmental Engineering**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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

RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Mid-America Freight Coalition (MAFC) at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 (I-44) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. MAFC represents the 10 State Departments of Transportation in the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials (MAASTO), and includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin. MAFC works collaboratively with the 10 States to support innovation, collaboration and multi-state freight corridor development in this region.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri (Greene County) to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

This project is important to MAFC and our partner State Departments of Transportation as a key regional freight corridor. I-44 provides regional connectivity and is one of the region's major freight corridors. MAFC will support the Missouri Department of Transportation in this effort by providing a regional perspective on the economic value, connectivity opportunities, the safety and delay related to, and impacting freight movement in Missouri and the region. MAFC will also reach out to all MAFC State partners to identify innovation, infrastructure and operational solutions, and peer state input to ensure the I-44 projects solutions exceed expectation for all stakeholders.

The I-44 is a major east-west corridor that begins in Texas, traverses through Oklahoma, and terminates on the eastern border of Missouri at St Louis. INFRA funding will make significant safety and capacity improvements on the I-44 as it travels through Springfield (population 168,122). Globally, Springfield is known as the "stainless steel capital of the world" with almost all stainless-steel tanks used in the food production and processing industry manufactured in the Springfield region. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000, with 27 percent being freight haulers. Also, the Springfield-Branson International

Airport (accessed directly from the I-44) is a major supply chain facility for companies including FedEx and Bass Pro Shops, and important to tourism via Branson and Silver Dollar City - - located 50 miles south and welcoming 9 million visitors annually. For comparison, Disneyland and the Statue of Liberty welcome 18 million and 4.5 million visitors annually, respectively.

While Springfield is the State's 3rd largest city, it is the economic hub for 27 **rural counties**, including portions of Arkansas. The I-44 plays a significant role in the farm to market network and the value this Interstate facility brings to the rural communities cannot be emphasized enough. More than 50 percent of the land in Greene County is agriculture with cropland and pastureland being the primary land commodities and cattle (68,000 head in 2017) being the largest livestock inventory. These agriculture products feed America and the heartland and the supply chain is a vital component to our more than 1,800 farms in Greene County alone. There are an additional 26 counties with similar farmland statistics that would benefit firsthand by the proposed I-44 improvements.

Safety and economic vitality - - these are two key reasons why the I-44 improvements are extremely important to the region. I hope you will agree with me that an FHWA investment in the Springfield, Missouri region will bring far-reaching benefits to rural residents, urbanites, manufacturing, freight movement through ground transportation and air, and tourism, to name a few. We appreciate your review of MoDOT's application and hope to hear good news soon!

Sincerely,



Soyoung Ahn
Executive Director Mid America Freight Coalition
Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
College of Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1415 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
Email: sue.ahn@wisc.edu
Phone: (608) 265-9067



February 5, 2020

"Everywhere Should Be Like This"

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

RE: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal from the Missouri Department of Transportation:

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the members of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. The Missouri Department of Transportation is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri in Greene County to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

Interstate 44 is a major east-west corridor cutting across the southern portion of the middle section of the country. It provides a vital freight corridor for the country and for our metro area of nearly half a million people. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000 vehicles, with 27 percent being over-the-road freight haulers.

Springfield, a city of 168,122 people, is home to the headquarters of national brands like Bass Pro Shops and O'Reilly Auto Parts. It supports a strong manufacturing sector with nationally significant clusters in stainless steel tank manufacturing, remanufacturing, and food production and has grown a large logistics presence with Kraft Heinz, The French's Food Company, and Convoy of Hope distributing from Springfield with Prime Inc, TransLand, and several other trucking companies based here. Our region also boasts 50,000 college students, half of which attend Missouri State University.

Springfield is the third largest city in Missouri and center of an economic area comprising 27 counties (and well over 1 million people) in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. The city is the economic, cultural, health care, and employment center for the area and I-44 is a critical connection for the region to the rest of the United States.

INFRA funding will allow our region to make significant safety and capacity improvements on this priority corridor as it travels through Springfield. We encourage your support for the I-44 project.

Sincerely,

Matt Morrow
President



Bass Pro Shops • 2500 E. Kearney Street • Springfield, MO 65898
417-873-5000 • Fax 417-831-2802

February 13, 2020

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

**RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal**

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of Bass Pro Shops and White River Marine Group, I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. The Missouri Department of Transportation is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri in Greene County to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

Interstate 44 is a major east-west corridor cutting across the southern portion of the middle section of the country. It provides a vital freight corridor for the country, for our metro area of nearly half a million people, and for our business. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000 vehicles, with 27 percent being over-the-road freight haulers.

Bass Pro Shops, was founded in 1972 in Springfield, Missouri and has grown to become the leading national retailer of outdoor gear and apparel. Our company continues to operate from the Missouri Ozarks. Today, we have over 200 retail and marine center locations across North America. In 2019 alone, Bass Pro Shops' main distribution center, located in Springfield, MO received and shipped nearly 24,000 loads of freight, with virtually all traveling east or west bound on I-44 through Springfield.

Additionally, White River Marine Group, a member of Bass Pro Group, is the largest manufacturer of boats in the world by volume. We operate manufacturing plants in Lebanon, MO; Ozark, MO; Clinton, MO and Miami, OK. Annually, our plants ship more than 7,000 loads a year through I-44 in Springfield.

The widening of I-44 through Springfield is important to our business as we continue to provide outdoor equipment and American-made boats to our customers across North America. INFRA funding will allow our region to make significant safety and capacity improvements on this priority corridor as it travels through Springfield. We encourage your support for the I-44 project.

Sincerely,

Justin Salmans
VP Chief Supply Chain & Procurement Officer
Bass Pro Shops

February 6, 2020

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

**RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal**

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the John Deere, I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. The Missouri Department of Transportation is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri in Greene County to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

Interstate 44 is a major east-west corridor cutting across the southern portion of the middle section of the country. It provides a vital freight corridor for the country and for our metro area of nearly half a million people. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000 vehicles, with 27 percent being over-the-road freight haulers.

Springfield, a city of 168,122 people, is home to the headquarters of national brands like Bass Pro Shops and O'Reilly Auto Parts. It supports a strong manufacturing sector with nationally significant clusters in stainless steel tank manufacturing, remanufacturing, and food production and has grown a large logistics presence with Kraft Heinz, The French's Food Company, and Convoy of Hope distributing from Springfield with Prime Inc, TransLand, and several other trucking companies based here. Our region also boasts 50,000 college students, half of which attend Missouri State University.

Springfield is the third largest city in Missouri and center of an economic area comprising 27 counties (and well over 1 million people) in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. The city is the economic, cultural, health care, and employment center for the area and I-44 is a critical connection for the region to the rest of the United States.

This project is important to our company because of the opportunity it presents to our company, dealers and customers as jobs are created to execute the improvements and consistent access is enabled through improved roads and bridges. INFRA funding will allow our region to make significant safety and capacity improvements on this priority corridor as it travels through Springfield. We encourage your support for the I-44 project.

Sincerely,



Jena Holtberg-Benge
General Manager, John Deere Reman



February 12, 2020

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

**RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal**

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the employees of Central States Industrial Equipment & Service, Inc., I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. The Missouri Department of Transportation is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri in Greene County to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

Interstate 44 is a major east-west corridor cutting across the southern portion of the middle section of the country. It provides a vital freight corridor for the country and for our metro area of nearly half a million people. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000 vehicles, with 27 percent being over-the-road freight haulers.

Springfield, a city of 168,122 people, is home to the headquarters of national brands like Bass Pro Shops and O'Reilly Auto Parts. It supports a strong manufacturing sector with nationally significant clusters in stainless steel tank manufacturing, remanufacturing, and food production and has grown a large logistics presence with Kraft Heinz, The French's Food Company, and Convoy of Hope distributing from Springfield with Prime Inc, TransLand, and several other trucking companies based here. Our region also boasts 50,000 college students, half of which attend Missouri State University.

Springfield is the third largest city in Missouri and center of an economic area comprising 27 counties (and well over 1 million people) in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. The city is the economic, cultural, health care, and employment center for the area and I-44 is a critical connection for the region to the rest of the United States.

This project is important to our company for two primary reasons. First of which is employee safety. Many of our two hundred employees drive I-44 both to and from work. Routinely, there is congestion and accidents along the route that delay an employee's commute. Additionally, our company distributes components and equipment via common carrier and dedicated truck which heavily rely upon I-44. INFRA funding will allow our region to make significant safety and capacity improvements on this priority corridor as it travels through Springfield. We encourage your enthusiastic support for the I-44 project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Reynolds', is written over a white background.

Joe Reynolds
President

February 6, 2020

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

**RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal**

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of Kraft Heinz, I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. The Missouri Department of Transportation is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri in Greene County to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

Interstate 44 is a major east-west corridor cutting across the southern portion of the middle section of the country. It provides a vital freight corridor for the country and for our metro area of nearly half a million people. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000 vehicles, with 41 percent being over-the-road freight haulers.

Springfield, a city of 168,122 people, is home to the headquarters of national brands like Bass Pro Shops and O'Reilly Auto Parts. It supports a strong manufacturing sector with nationally significant clusters in stainless steel tank manufacturing, remanufacturing, and food production and has grown a large logistics presence with Kraft Heinz, The French's Food Company, and Convoy of Hope distributing from Springfield with Prime Inc, TransLand, and several other trucking companies based here. Our region also boasts 50,000 college students, half of which attend Missouri State University.

Springfield is the third largest city in Missouri and a center of an economic area comprising 27 counties (and well over 1 million people) in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. The city is the economic, cultural, health care, and employment center for the area and I-44 is a critical connection for the region to the rest of the United States.

This project is important to our company because in a typical week, Kraft Heinz will have over 500 inbound and outbound tractor/trailers servicing our plant. Kraft Heinz also has a significant distribution presence at the Springfield Caves. INFRA funding will allow our region to make significant safety and capacity improvements on this priority corridor as it travels through Springfield. We encourage your support for the I-44 project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kurt R. Bain". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kurt Bain, Plant Manager, Kraft Heinz



Department of Public Safety
MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL
Colonel Eric T. Olson, Superintendent



An
Internationally
Accredited
Agency

Michael L. Parson
Governor

Sandra K. Karsten
Director

February 11, 2020

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

RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: FIX I-44: Freight, Innovation and Safety for the Ozarks Project

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Missouri State Highway Patrol I am writing to express our strong support for the FIX I-44: Freight, Innovation and Safety for the Ozarks project. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri (Greene County) to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

I-44 is a major east-west corridor that begins in Texas, traverses through Oklahoma, and terminates on the eastern border of Missouri at St Louis. This grant funding will make significant safety and capacity improvements on I-44 as it travels through Springfield (population 168,122). Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000, with 27 percent being freight haulers. Also, the Springfield-Branson International Airport (accessed directly from the I-44) is a major supply chain facility for companies including FedEx and Bass Pro Shops, and important to tourism via Branson and Silver Dollar City - - located 50 miles south and welcoming 9 million visitors annually. For comparison, Disneyland and the Statue of Liberty welcome 18 million and 4.5 million visitors annually, respectively.

While Springfield is the State's 3rd largest city, it is the economic hub for 27 **rural counties**, including portions of Arkansas. I-44 plays a significant role in the farm to market network and the value this Interstate facility brings to the rural communities cannot be emphasized enough. More than 50 percent of the land in Greene County is agriculture with cropland and pastureland being the primary land commodities and cattle being the largest livestock inventory. These agriculture products feed America and the heartland and the supply chain is a vital component to our more than 1,800 farms in Greene County alone. There are an additional 26 counties with similar farmland statistics that would benefit firsthand by the proposed I-44 improvements.

February 11, 2020
Honorable Elaine L. Chao
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Safety on the interstate systems in Missouri, such as I-44 is the top priority of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. The improvements for "FIX I-44: Freight, Innovation and Safety for the Ozarks" would improve safety for the region. On numerous occasions traffic crashes occur on I-44 in this area, which halts traffic for lengthy periods of time, resulting in secondary crashes. In 2019, one of the secondary crashes resulted in a fatality crash. The additional lanes would allow for continuous traffic flow making a safer pathway for motorists. Safety, and economic growth are reasons why the I-44 improvements are extremely important to the region. I hope you will agree with me that an investment in the Springfield, Missouri region will bring far-reaching benefits to rural residents, urbanites, safety, manufacturing, freight movement through ground transportation and air, and tourism, to name a few. We appreciate your review of MoDOT's application and hope their request will receive favorable approval.

Sincerely,

JOHN M. ENDERLE, Captain
Troop D