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P.O. Box 68 • Iron River, WI 54847-0068  
Phone (715) 372-4287 • Fax (715) 372-4318

March 31, 2022

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

Subject: Letter of Support – Bayfield County Wisconsin application for  
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity  
(RAISE) funding

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Bayfield Electric Cooperative (“BEC”), we are pleased to submit this Letter of Support for Bayfield County, Wisconsin’s application for a RAISE grant to help fund critical infrastructure needs.

The project attached will improve a 22-mile stretch of road in order to provide the local forest industry **year-round** access to county forest lands, increase the overall safety along the road and provide Electric Vehicle Charging Stations along the route. The southern segment of County Highway A and the western segment of County Highway N provide access to nearly 30% of the forest lands within the county. During spring heavy load limits are placed on the road at present as the road’s foundation is not able to support heavy loads. For approximately 60 days every year the county must impose weight limits which prevent logging trucks from accessing forest lands. Having an alternate route as a backup in case of severe weather will have a significant impact on roadway safety. Since both WI 63 and US 2 have washed out over the last five years, the proposed improvements would create critical backup routes in such severe weather events.

This proposed project includes plans for reconstructing these roads to ensure they are usable in all-seasons. Improvements include base improvements, surfacing, paved road edges and improved shoulders which will improve safety, rideability and all-season access for trucking in addition to electric vehicle charging stations. These improvements will create immediate savings for local businesses and strengthen the county’s rural communities.

This project’s improvements are consistent with the RAISE program’s goals and those of our organization whose goal is to expand access to Electric Vehicle

Charging Stations in the northern Wisconsin and our service territory. BEC has worked with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission ("NWRPC") to identify an ideal location at the northern end of the project, the junction of County Highway A and U.S. Highway 2. The location is owned by NWRCP, has ample room for a charging station and parking, and BEC already has the three-phase power at the site needed for a fast charger. The location is also approximately the midpoint between Superior, WI and Ashland, WI on U.S. Highway 2. The estimated cost to purchase and install a Level 3 (480V) charger is between \$40,000 and \$50,000. The proposed transportation improvements in this application will greatly improve safety, mobility of commercial traffic, and rural economic growth in addition to having positive environmental and climate impacts by encouraging electric vehicle usage in Bayfield County.

Thank you for your consideration and approval of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'COPK', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Christopher Kopel  
Chief Executive Officer