



Wisconsin Department of Transportation
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December 12, 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 Application for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Funding

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 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 outlined in the county's application will improve a 22-mile stretch of road in order to provide the local forest industry year-round access to the county's forests and to increase the overall safety along the road. 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 thaws, however, the road's foundation is not able to support heavy loads and approximately two months of every year the county must impose weight limits which prevent logging trucks from accessing the forest lands. This proposed project includes plans for reconstructing these roads to ensure they are usable in all seasons. Improvements include new base, surfacing, paved road edges and improved shoulders which will improve safety, rideability and all-season access for trucking. These improvements will create immediate savings for local businesses, and thereby strengthening the county's rural communities. The project roadway improvements will have a significant impact on roadway safety and will create critical alternate routes in case of severe weather events.

This project's improvements are consistent with the RAISE program's goals and those of our organization. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is responsible for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the State of Wisconsin; WisDOT will provide project oversight and administration for this project. The proposed transportation improvements in this application will greatly improve safety, mobility of commercial traffic, and rural economic growth in Bayfield County. Bayfield County is requesting \$14.5 million from RAISE, the total project cost is \$16.1 million.

The project outlined in the county's application will improve a 22-mile stretch of road in order to provide commercial freight loads and the local forest industry with year-round access to the southwestern portion of the county. This will provide year-round access to the county's forests which is a major industry in the county, and to increase the overall safety along the road. The southern segment of County Highway A and western segment of County Highway N provide access to nearly 30% of the forest land within the county. During spring thaw, however, the road's foundation is not

able to support standard commercial loads and approximately two months of every year the county must impose weight limits which prevent logging trucks from accessing forest lands. This proposed project includes plans for reconstructing these roads to ensure they are usable in all-seasons. Improvements include new base, surfacing, paved road edges and improved shoulders which will improve safety, rideability and all-season access for trucking. These improvements will create immediate savings for local businesses, and thereby strengthening the county's rural communities. The project roadway improvements will have a significant impact on roadway safety and will provide sustainability creating alternate routes in case of severe weather events.

Thank you for your consideration and approval of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Thompson', written in a cursive style.

Craig Thompson
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Transportation