



File Code: 7100; 1500
Date:

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (Forest) is 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 including a significant part of the Washburn Ranger District of the Forest. In spring for about 60 days, vehicle weight limits are placed on this road, restricting use to essentially passenger vehicles only. This has negative consequences on several agricultural and forestry operations including limiting access to forest lands for timber harvests and haul routes from timber sale areas which increases the distance needed to haul and increases cost.

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 would enhance the ongoing sustainable management of national forests lands including timber sales that are an important component of the economies and culture of rural communities. 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,

JENNIFER K. YOUNGBLOOD
Forest Supervisor

cc: Mark Beuning, Gus Smith, Mark Abeles-Allison (Bayfield County Administrator)

