



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

a division of the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation

January 31st, 2023

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 Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development Organization, 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 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.

This proposed project includes plans for reconstructing these roads to ensure they are usable in all-seasons while also providing critical backup routes in the case of potential flooding induced infrastructure impacts. 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 support economic growth in northwest Wisconsin. 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,

Crystal Rohde, Administrator
Visions Northwest