



Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

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January 19, 2023

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: RAISE Project Bayfield County, WI

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa supports the application of Bayfield County, Wisconsin for a US DOT RAISE grant in 2022. Bayfield County is a rural community in NW Wisconsin.

The Red Cliff Band places a very high priority on transportation infrastructure to facilitate economic growth and competitiveness and for the wellbeing of the members of this community. It is critical to maintain roads in order to support forest and tourism industries, as well as all economic development and to improve the quality of life for area residents and visitors.

Reconstruction of County Highway A from Iron River to Highway N and then west to Highway 27 will provide year-round transportation options for forestry and construction work in a crucial part of Bayfield County. Bayfield County is the second largest county in Wisconsin covering 1500 square miles. Highway 63, located on the eastern side of the county is currently the only All-Season highway going south of US 2 in the County and it has experienced numerous closures over the past five years due to major flooding. Both US 2 and STH 63 were forced to close in 2018 due to a catastrophic flooding event that washed out several major culverts and bridges. This required emergency repairs and traffic diversion, which had a huge impact on local commerce.

It is crucial to create a second all season route to mitigate the increasing threat severe flooding has imposed on transportation infrastructure and the impact to the County's economic vitality in recent years. Presently all county roads are **closed** to heavy traffic for approximately 75 days a year as frost dissipates from road subgrades and road bans are put in place.

"The Hub of the Chippewa Nation"

Improvements on this existing county highway will support commerce, economic development opportunities and improve safety for county residents, visitors and travelers through improved construction standards and increased durability. Improved shoulder grading and right of way clearing will greatly improve safety and this project will address the poor condition due to existing logging, the number one economic generator in the county and other heavy truck traffic.

Red Cliff recognizes the significance Highways A and N provide to the region's economy, and the access to health and education facilities it provides including two regional hospitals, several technical colleges and universities and many K thru 12 schools.

Highways A and N provide access to over 100 inland lakes with year-round residents as well as vacation homes and local businesses who depend on safe and well-constructed roads for their quality of life and livelihood. This road improvement will create immediate savings for local business and improve revenue streams for local government benefitting from year-round accesson these two county highways.

In addition to the improvements desperately needed on County Highway A, Bayfield County is seeking funds for the installation of two Electric Vehicle Charging Stations as part of this project. As the nation moves towards a zero emissions future, installing these stations will enable Bayfield County to keep pace and participate with other governmental units and transportation service in and around the county.

Please fund Bayfield County's RAISE project.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Peterson, Vice Chairman