

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0403

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

I am requesting funding for the I-49 Expansion from Arkansas Highway 22 to I-40 Segment 1 Project Development project in fiscal year 2022.

The entity to receive funding for this project is the Arkansas Department of Transportation. The Department's address is 10324 Interstate 30 Little Rock, Arkansas 72209, and the project is located in Sebastian and Crawford Counties in Western Arkansas.

This project supports the development and design of the expansion of the Western Arkansas section of I-49 from Arkansas Highway 22 to I-40 in Alma, Arkansas. This Segment 1 project runs from Arkansas Highway 22 in Barling, Arkansas (located in Sebastian County), bridges the Arkansas River, to Gun Club Road in Crawford County. The total cost for Segment 1 is \$271,393,398; this project development portion request is for \$25,000,000 to complete preliminary design for a two-lane facility from Hwy. 22 to I-40. The project is currently under initial project development work and this requested investment will ensure the final design and development moves forward expeditiously.

This project is vital to continued economic development and expansion of the Ft. Smith/Western Arkansas area. This project is the first step to linking Western Arkansas with the I-49 corridor and, thus, having an uninterrupted Interstate Highway from Winnipeg, Canada, through the central United States to New Orleans. Connecting I-40 in Alma to Ft. Smith is vital to supporting the second largest city in Arkansas and further opening up important commerce and transit routes. Bridging the Arkansas River is the most challenging (engineering-wise and economically) portion of the I-49 expansion project and this funding will support final, detailed design for that section. The State of Arkansas and her citizens have made a strong commitment to this project through the recently passed Arkansas Ballot Issue 1 (which extends the current statewide 1% sales tax in perpetuity). Following the passage of that ballot issue, the Arkansas Department of Transportation programmed \$270,000,000 for the whole I-49 expansion project (all three segments). This request project will leverage that significant state investment and ensure the project delivers on its economic promise.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Steve Womack
Member of Congress