



RANKIN FIRST

April 5, 2022

Mayor Jake Windham
City of Pearl
P. O. Box 5948
Pearl, MS 39288

Re: Letter of Support for Pearl/Richland Intermodal Connector Phase II
2022 USDOT – RAISE Planning Application

Dear Mayor Windham:

We applaud your continued leadership in partnership with the City of Richland, through the Pearl Richland Intermodal Connector Commission, to actively pursue completion of the Pearl Richland Intermodal Connector Project. Mississippi's 2017 Statewide Freight Plan identified this project as a Critical Urban Freight Corridor because of the connectivity of public roads in urbanized areas to a Primary Highway Freight System, the Interstate and intermodal freight facilities. Specifically, this project will support intermodal rail/truck transfers for safe and efficient freight movement on the I-20/KCS and US 49/CN corridors. Further, the project will ease traffic congestion by rerouting freight traffic to measurably improve public safety for motorists and first responders; and create an efficient connection between two (2) Low Income Community Opportunity Zones; 1) Pearl (#2812102701) and 2) Richland (#281210220401).

Rankin First appreciates your efforts to secure the \$16.18M necessary to get Phase I under construction with completion anticipated for the Spring of 2022. The widening of existing South Pearson Road to 5-lanes from north of Richland Creek to SR 468 including connecting roads and construct an overpass bridge over the Kansas City Southern Railway to eliminate a potentially dangerous rail crossing. Phase I was funded by the Federal Highway Administration and Mississippi DOT.

As the economic development group for Rankin County, we realize the importance of this project being totally funded and completed in both phases. Not only for the safety of our citizens and travelers through our county but also for the improved operations of the intermodal facility and its impact on increased economic development opportunities.

Phase II will complete the Intermodal Connector's remaining 1.90 miles by widening existing Pearson Road to 4-lane and constructing a new 4-lane road to connect with US 49. I strongly support your \$5M 2022 RAISE Planning application which will allow work to immediately proceed with design to incorporate new environmental sustainability measures and innovative technologies and other practices to drive safety, equity, climate, and resilience. This grant will also allow additional public engagement in conjunction with updating and finalizing NEPA documents. We believe that this planning grant is vital to continue the project's strong momentum toward construction.

As always Mayor, we appreciate everything you do for Pearl and Rankin County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom".

Tom Troxler
Executive Director, Rankin First