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SENATOR CLIFF R. PIRTLE

R-Chaves, Eddy & Otero-32

5507 Y.O. Rd.
Roswell, NM 88203

Cell: (575) 626-7046
E-mail: cliff.pirtle@nmlegis.gov

August 10, 2023

U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: U.S. 380 Safety Improvements

Dear Grant Reviewers:

As the State Senator for District 32, I am writing to express my support for the use of Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant funds for safety improvements on U.S. 380 in New Mexico.

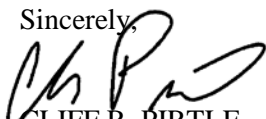
U.S. 380, from Roswell, New Mexico, to the Texas state line, is a two-lane, east-west rural highway. It connects communities across the southwest and serves diverse freight, agricultural, and tourist users along the way. One of the primary freight users of this corridor is traffic associated with oil and gas production. New Mexico is a leading producer of crude oil and natural gas, and much of the oil and gas come from the Permian Basin in southeast New Mexico and west Texas. Through U.S. 380, oil and gas are transported from the basin to other parts of the country to fuel America's energy economy.

The highway also services the regional agricultural economy and is used by cattle ranchers and farmers to transport livestock and crops, including pecans, hay, peppers, corn, wheat, peanuts, and cotton, to market. In addition, retirees, families, and other adventurers utilize the highway to access Ruidoso and the Lincoln National Forest, the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Roswell's famous UFO and alien museum, and fishing spots and hiking trails along the Pecos River. This stretch of highway also allows Tatum residents, a town with less than 300 households, to access jobs, shops, and services in the larger neighboring municipalities.

Each day, diverse drivers share this rural two-lane road, and because of the constraints and existing road conditions, the traffic has been dangerous and often lethal. Slow trucks and farm traffic back up on the two-lane road and impatient drivers attempt unsafe lane changes because there are no passing lanes (except for one small stretch). The proposed improvements to U.S. 380 – adding passing lanes at key intervals every 7-10 miles and improving the pavement conditions – would greatly improve safety and transform this corridor to connect communities, facilitate the flow of commerce, and provide safe passage for locals and visitors alike. The proposed improvements also align with the National Roadway Safety Strategy and USDOT's commitment to take "substantial, comprehensive action to significantly reduce serious and fatal injuries on the Nation's roadways." With this funding, that vision can become a reality for this important and busy stretch of southern New Mexico.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


CLIFF R. PIRTLE
State Senator