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May 6, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Ozark Greenways, Inc. is pleased to support the FIX I-44: Freight, Innovation and Safety for the Ozarks project. The Missouri Department of Transportation is requesting federal funding for improvements to I-44 through Springfield, Missouri that will improve freight mobility, safety, economic vitality, and multi-modal community connections.

Ozark Greenways is the driving force behind the planned 200+ regional trail system to connect and enhance our community as a key component of a robust transportation network for all ages and abilities. The project will increase connections for people who walk and bicycle in a historically distressed and disconnected area of north Springfield, Missouri. It will also include a new trail connection under I-44 at Doling Park to connect the northern Springfield community. This will be the future connection between the Pea Ridge Trail (north of I-44) and the City of Springfield's LINK (on-street bicycle facilities and sidewalks) (south of I-44).

The FIX I-44 project also adds capacity, improves pavement condition, and reconfigures a major interchange at Kansas Expressway/Route 13. These critical improvements will ensure that local drivers of motor vehicles, people walking and bicycling, regional freight movement, and tourist traffic to Branson and the tri-lakes area can safely coexist, while improving connectivity between the north and south sides of I-44, which is a major barrier for people walking and bicycling.

This project is important for overall connectivity. We appreciate your consideration of the Fix I-44 project and look forward to continued efforts to connect communities in the Springfield, MO area.

Sincerely,

Mary Kromrey

Mary Kromrey
Executive Director