



CAMPBELL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Mayor E.L. Morton

OFFICE: 423-562-2526 570 Main Street, P.O. Box 435
FAX: 423-562-2075 JACKSBORO, TENNESSEE 37757

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

June 28, 2021

RE: 2021 RAISE Grant Proposal for I-75 Smart Fiber in Tennessee

Mr. Secretary,

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT's) 2021 RAISE Grant Proposal for I-75 Smart Fiber in rural Tennessee from Chattanooga to Jellico. Broadband provides critically important connectivity for this vital corridor in Campbell County for:

- **Economic Growth** – This project is the foundation for future public-private partnerships with telecommunications companies that will provide broadband access in numerous economically distressed and at-risk counties along I-75 between Chattanooga and Jellico. This is particularly true for Jellico Exit 156, an interstate exchange in need of broadband, water and gas lines to unlock tremendous business potential.
- **Safety** – Smart infrastructure will decrease serious injury and fatal crashes through real-time alerts such as work zone locations, traffic crash and queue locations, weather alerts, traffic signal information, and support technologies specifically designed for crash avoidance.
- **Equity**– Smart Fiber creates increased accessibility for wider and higher paying jobs and increased educational possibilities for everyone.
- **Integration** - This project connects **two 2021 U.S. Scenic Byways: Cumberland Historic Byway (Hwy 63E) & Norris Freeway (Hwy 441)**, Four State Parks, Royal Blue Multi-use Trails, Norris Lake and rural Campbell County Public School Students with no internet.
- **Innovation** – This project will deploy cutting edge connected vehicle technology along I-75.

I am excited to be a part of this grant program as it aligns with Governor Lee's First Executive order to better serve Rural Tennessee and it aligns perfectly with Campbell County's rural broadband expansion plan. This plan is in a third expansion since 2019, but had no means of connecting to I-75, until now.

Thank you for the opportunity to endorse this project. Campbell County is honored to be the Front Door to Tennessee along I-75 South. This project will provide critical broadband access to Campbell County residents, I-75 travelers and businesses in Jellico, Pioneer, Caryville, Jacksboro and LaFollette.

Sincerely,

E.L. Morton, Campbell County Mayor