Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Service

Indian Health Service
Cheyenne River Health Center
24276 Airport Road
PO Box 1012
Eagle Butte, SD 57625

September 29, 2023

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: FY2023 Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Please consider this letter written confirmation of our full support of the Cheyenne River Tribe's application for NSFLTP grant funding to assist in construction of the BIA 12 Cherry Creek to Eagle Highway 63 Improvement Project.

The NSFLT grant application addresses one of the Tribe's most critical transportation infrastructure needs, positively impacting the Cheyenne River Reservation, and most directly the communities of Cherry Creek and Eagle Butte. The current condition of this vital community roadway is insufficient to meet the traffic needs and presents safety, accessibility, and sustainability risks. The proposed construction project will address these issues and will ensure consistent, year-round access to the residents of Cherry Creek to essential services, amenities, and employment opportunities in Eagle Butte. This route is also critical for school access, providing transportation for children to schools at both Eagle Butte and Takini schools. This route is essential for the ambulance service at the Indian Health Service Hospital in Eagle Butte to provide emergency services. In the timeframe of 01/01/2022 thru 08/31/2022 there were 145 ambulance calls to the Cherry Creek community and surrounding areas.

Like many Reservations and Tribal communities, the Cheyenne River Tribe has been devastated by COVID, not just in the loss of so many Tribal members to the disease, but in the ensuing loss of wages, work opportunities, and increased isolation in an already rural/frontier and isolated communities. This project addresses much needed infrastructure support that will impact traveler safety, access, mobility, and connectivity.

The Tribe has committed time and financial resources, exemplifying commitment to the project and to their people. We hope you will support this project through a NSFLTP grant award. We look forward to the opportunity to partner with USDOT on this exciting endeavor. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Justin J. Keckler -S Digitally signed by Justin J. Keckler -S
Date: 2023.09.29 11:08:03 -06'00'

Justin J. Keckler – Acting CEO
Cheyenne River Health Center