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February 24, 2023

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

**RE: Safety and Connectivity Project for RAISE Grant Program
Mesa County, Colorado: Orchard Avenue (E ½ Road) Project**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in strong support of Mesa County, Colorado's application to the RAISE Discretionary Grant program. Mesa County's Orchard Avenue project is in the heart of a rural community in an unincorporated area of the county, and the full scope of the project meets the RAISE program's rural criteria. The project location is bounded by three areas of persistent poverty, and the county's overall demographics include scoring in Colorado State's 71 percentile for low income and 78 percentile for unemployment per the EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool.

Funding and completion of the Orchard Avenue project would improve this rural community. Importantly, it would provide vital safety improvements to the roadway linking the underserved neighborhood to Grand Junction which is an employment center. It would also create essential and beneficial, affordable multi-modal transportation options to connect residential areas to a park, schools, and nearby services in addition to employment opportunities.

Although the RAISE grant program allows for projects which connect to urban centers, I encourage the Department of Transportation to consider favorably the added merit of projects—like Mesa County's multi-modal corridor—which benefit underserved communities which are fully defined as rural. Community stakeholders and the county have already partnered to achieve a Colorado Department of Transportation grant for Revitalizing Main Streets under the "Larger Safety Infrastructure Grant" segment of this program, which also helps define the necessity of the Orchard Avenue project.

If RAISE funding were paired with the CDOT grant, the entire project would be set for completion by 2032. As the timing depicts, this would be a major enhancement to the community providing improved safety and accessibility, and encouraging further revitalization to the area. My support for completion of the Orchard Avenue Multi-Modal Corridor is based on

the excellent stakeholder participation they have already demonstrated, and the obvious improvement the project will bring to the quality of life for the rural Coloradans of Mesa County. Your consideration of Mesa County's request is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lauren Boebert".

Congresswoman Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress