

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
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February 23, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write to you today in strong support of the \$6 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant application from Santa Cruz County, Arizona to rebuild the Ruby Road Bridge over Portero Creek and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) project.

This proposed project would replace a dilapidated and overused 40-year-old bridge, which is approaching the end of its expected lifespan. The new bridge would:

- Span the railroad and Potrero Creek, which would provide the County with the only route that is accessible in a flooding event or railroad emergency;
- Assist I-19 current operations and future projects, and;
- Serve as a vital component of the Interconnect Road from State Route 82 to Interstate 19, which would aid commerce as well as provide a direct connection to Nogales International Airport.

The Ruby Road Bridge project would also serve a Historically Disadvantaged Community in an area of persistent poverty. As this bridge would be the only access point that crosses the UPRR and Portero Creek, it would provide a resilient and reliable east-west connection to emergency services, businesses, underserved residents and new potential economic development. Ruby Road is also the main access point to tourist attractions such as the Coronado National Forest, Patagonia Lake State Park and southern Arizona wine country towns of Sonoita and Elgin and the Town of Patagonia.

It is important to note that of the nearly 50,000 residents in the County, more than 80 percent speak Spanish at home. In addition, more than 20 percent of the residents live in poverty and the median household income is approximately \$45,000, which is well below the national average of more than \$70,000 per year (July 2021 statistics).

In 2022, the Arizona State Legislature, knowing the importance of this project, appropriated \$3 million for it. The County, and other partners have contributed an additional \$3 million toward the project, which could bring the cost-share match to 50-50 between the federal government and the local sponsor.

I am proud to support Santa Cruz County's application for \$6 million in RAISE grant funding. In accordance with all existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines, I respectfully ask that you give this proposal full and fair consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress