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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

May 9, 2022

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
ATTN: Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of every Kansan – and the hundreds of thousands of visitors who enjoy outdoor recreation in Kansas each year – I wish to express my strong support of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' RAISE grant application for the Flint Hills Trail expansion project.

Flint Hills Trail is truly a treasure in that it's part of the longest trail system in the state, connecting six counties and 11 incorporated towns along the main east-west corridor. This trail not only provides a positive economic impact through increased tourism, it harnesses the potential to encourage outdoor health and fitness activities for Kansans and visitors alike by providing an exciting opportunity to ride or hike through one of our state's most striking and well-preserved natural features. No doubt it's these very benefits that compelled the Federal Highway Administration to select Kansas' Flint Hills Trail as the recipient of a 2022 Environmental Excellence Award – a national recognition we are most proud of. But our work isn't yet done.

If awarded, the Flint Hills Trail project has the potential to turn grant dollars into much-needed improvements:

- *Improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians by providing a safe, off-road corridor for recreation and active transportation*
- *Enhanced publicly-available outdoor recreation opportunities – a rarity in our state that is 97% privately owned*
- *New and enhanced ADA-accessible recreation and transportation opportunities for Kansans and visitors with limited physical mobility.*

Never before has creating an equitable environment for all constituents been more important, and never before has such a diverse opportunity existed like the one that exists right here, right now, on Kansas' Flint Hills Trail.

I strongly encourage you to select the Flint Hills Trail for the 2022 RAISE grant, and to support the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' goal of "Connecting communities, cultures and landscapes" for future generations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Kelly".

Laura Kelly
Governor of Kansas