



April 20, 2020

Elaine Chao, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Altus, Oklahoma FY 2020 Build Grant Application

Plains Cotton Cooperative Association has had a warehouse location in Altus, Oklahoma since 1963. Our function is to receive, store and ultimately ship baled cotton for its farmer members in Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas. Cotton production has had its peaks and valleys over the past 50 plus years but is now experiencing some of its most rapid expansion of our history.

This expanded production has put significant pressure on our infrastructure and has required us to expand significantly. In the last three years we will have completed two major warehouse expansion projects with total invest of over \$10 million. Most of, if not all of, the cotton grown in our trade territory is destined for the export market with an annual value in the \$200 to \$250 million range. No product can enter the export market without a transportation infrastructure designed to meet the demand. The proposed Altus Economic Loop will be vital in providing "that last mile" and "the first mile" of this export product. We are heavily dependent on highway transportation via semi-trucks and they are frankly getting beat to death on the current road system. An average year will see over 15,000 trucks enter and leave our facility all traveling on the proposed Altus Economic Loop.

We employ approximately 25 full time and 25 seasonal employees with an annual payroll approaching \$3 million. The current trend in the cotton industry is for continued expansion and as we all know the customer has choices so it is imperative that we do all we can to enhance the flow of cotton both into and out of our facilities. We are very well positioned to capture this growth and hence add the necessary employees and make the additional capital expenditures to handle it.

Without a doubt we stand in strong support of the efforts to construct the Altus Economic Loop and the 2020 Build grant application, it will be a very important boost to one of the areas major industries; agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jay T. Cowart'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay T. Cowart
V.P. Warehouse Operations