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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kern Council of Governments Secures \$1.37M Federal USDOT BUILD Grant to Study State Route 58 from I-5 to Barstow

Bakersfield, CA — October 15, 2026 — Kern Council of Governments has been awarded a \$1.37M discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation under the BUILD program. The federal funding will facilitate a detailed study of State Route 58 between Interstate 5 in Kern County to Interstate 15 in Barstow. The study will consider what is needed to consider re-designating the route from State Route 58 to Interstate 40 in light of the dramatically rising freight traffic. The Study will also consider the economic impact of improvements to the route.

"This grant is the first step to defining needed improvements to SR 58," said Jay Schlosser, Executive Director, Kern Council of Governments. "Once understood, we are looking to advance an understanding of the importance of this roadway to Kern County, the State of California, and the nation."

"State Route 58 is one of the most critical freight corridors in the entire country, connecting the Central Valley to national markets and carrying the goods that keep our economy moving," said Congressman Vince Fong. "This \$1.37 million BUILD grant is an important first step towards upgrading this corridor and unlocking its full potential for Kern County and the nation. I am proud to have supported this effort and look forward to seeing this study lay the groundwork for necessary and essential improvements to one of California's most vital transportation arteries."

"State Route 58 is a critical transportation corridor connecting Barstow to the Central Valley and supporting the movement of goods throughout California and across the country," said Congressman Jay Obernolte. "As freight traffic continues to increase, it is critically important that we evaluate opportunities to improve the safety, efficiency, and capacity of this roadway. This federal funding will help identify the infrastructure improvements needed to support economic growth and ensure this vital corridor can meet future transportation demands."

Kern Council of Governments appreciates the support of its partners, including KERN EDC, Congressmen Vince Fong and Jay Obernolte, the Kern County Board of Supervisors, and the Cities of Bakersfield, Shafter and Tehachapi, whose collaboration has been instrumental in advancing this effort, including helping initiate and support the study.

For more details on the project, please visit <https://www.kerncog.org/goods-movement/>.

Kern Council of Governments' areawide planning program is a continuous, comprehensive and coordinated process involving Kern Council of Governments member agencies as well as tribal governments and various state and federal agencies.

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