

# **Appendix E**



Janet T. Mills  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am pleased to submit the following letter in strong support of the Maine Department of Transportation's *Bridging the Economy of Rural Maine* project in which it is seeking \$23.6 million in federal funding assistance through the Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) program.

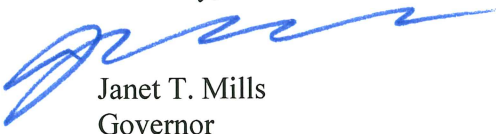
This funding, should it be awarded, would go towards the replacement and rehabilitation of six bridges, all in rural communities throughout Maine. Maine has nearly 2,500 bridges within its inventory, many of which are nearing the end of their useful lives. The six bridges identified for MaineDOT's project were all built prior to 1940 and each has at least one major component that is in poor condition. These structures serve as a lifeline to these communities, allowing area residents to access essential goods and healthcare.

Like many DOTs across the nation, MaineDOT is currently experiencing significant revenue loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note estimates that, with traffic counts down by 52% statewide, and over 60% in the Portland area, he expects State Highway Fund revenues will be down 40% - or about \$74 million - for the six-month period ending Sept 30, 2020, and down 15% - or another \$50 million - for the 12-month period thereafter (FY 2021). This totals a \$124 million Highway Fund revenue shortfall in Maine in just 18 months. It is for this reason that reliance on such discretionary funding programs, such as BUILD, has become even greater.

Each of these bridges serves as a critical link for the communities in which they are located. While they may be geographically spread out, they are connected by their importance to an economically distressed region and each serves one or more intertwined parts of the state's vast economy. The impact of their failure or closure on residents, tourists, and businesses would be great. Detours in the event of the closure of any of these bridges range from 13 to over 100 miles, an unacceptable distance when someone's life could depend on the arrival of emergency medical services.

I am hopeful that you will favorably view MaineDOT's application and award it the full funding it is seeking. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Commissioner Van Note.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills  
Governor



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3 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0003

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We are pleased to submit the following letter conveying our strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application. Through its application MaineDOT is seeking federal funding to assist with the replacement and rehabilitation of six bridges throughout the state of Maine, one in each of our legislative districts.

MaineDOT's project, *Bridging the Economy of Rural Maine*, will fully replace five bridges in Maine, while rehabilitating the remaining sixth bridge identified within the project. The bridges, located within the towns of Litchfield, Stonington, Greenbush, Southport, Milo, and Bridgewater, were all built prior to 1940 and have reached the end of their useful lives. Without further action, these structures are in jeopardy of being posted for weight or potentially closed. This would be to the great detriment of our constituents, who rely on unimpeded access to these structures to receive necessary goods and critical care. This funding will help to allow for uninterrupted supply chains for commerce to Maine's rural regions.

As state policy makers we understand the importance of the transportation system. Bridges maintain the connections to our communities. The loss of a bridge often means the loss of the entire transportation corridor. Most of the bridges identified in MaineDOT's project have little reasonable alternative routing that can handle the same traffic weight and density. While the detour routes of each of these bridges vary, the longest detour length is greater than 100 miles. At a time when emergency medical services are needed more than ever, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, any detour length could mean the difference between life and death.

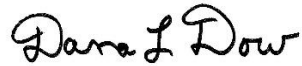
Through its BUILD grant application, MaineDOT is seeking \$23.6 million in federal funding to be matched by \$5.9 million in state funding, for an overall total project cost of \$29.5 million.

We thank you for taking the time to consider MaineDOT's application and hope you will respond favorably by awarding the funding it is requesting.

Sincerely,



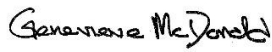
Michael E. Carpenter  
State Senator



Dana L. Dow  
State Senator



Jeffrey Timberlake  
State Senator

  
Genevieve McDonald  
State Representative



Paul T. Davis  
State Senator



Louis J. Luchini  
State Senator



Norman E. Higgins  
State Representative





# TOWN OF SOUTHPORT

p.o. box 149 southport, maine 04576-0149

March 31, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please accept this letter as strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application to replace or repair six key highway bridges in rural locations throughout the State of Maine; *Bridging the Economy of Rural Maine*.

As you are aware, the State of Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to its geography, weather and population density. Maine is one of the most rural states in the country. The rural nature of the state makes reliable infrastructure critical for goods to be transported, people to get to and from work, go to school, shop and access health care centers and to allow for tourism and recreation. This BUILD project will replace or repair bridges in six rural towns (Bridgewater, Greenbush, Litchfield, Milo, Southport and Stonington) in six of the most rural counties in the country (Aroostook, Penobscot, Kennebec, Piscataquis, Lincoln and Hancock). Trucks, tourists and residents progress through these towns to make deliveries, enjoy the natural beauty that Maine has to offer and to simply conduct the routine of daily lives without unnecessary impediments. These bridges, each built prior to 1940 are critical to the residents and businesses throughout Maine and given their current conditions the potential for closure is real. If they were ever closed, the resulting detours would in some cases be over an hour and in one case would force the establishment of a ferry service to the island it connects; each is clearly an unacceptable option and an unfair burden for the rural communities. If these bridges are not replaced, this region of the Northeast will see a further decline in financial opportunities and a disadvantage to the rest of the region.

I am pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the US Department of Transportation to make these investments. I strongly believe that this region of the country cannot be competitive on a regional, national or global scale if the highway bridges are not upgraded to ensure resiliency and reliability. The declining condition of the bridges and so many like them increases risk to the quality of life for the residents and works to further expand the rural opportunity gap experienced in this area of Maine.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you please consider funding this project fully with a BUILD grant.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gerald L. Gamage  
Chairman, Town of Southport Selectmen

# Town of Stonington

32 Main Street  
Stonington, Maine 04681



March 31, 2020

## Select Committee

Donna Brewer  
Chairwoman  
Evelyn Duncan  
John Steed  
Travis Fifield  
John Robbins

## Staff

Kathleen Billings  
Town Manager  
Treasurer  
Tax Collector

Diane Hardie  
Town Clerk

Bridget Brophy  
Deputy Clerk

Henry Teverow  
Economic Developer

Raelene Pert  
Shellfish Warden  
Harbormaster

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please consider my strong support when deliberating over the Maine Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application to replace or repair six key highway bridges in rural locations throughout the State of Maine; *Bridging the Economy of Rural Maine*.

As you are aware, the State of Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to its geography, weather and population density. Maine is one of the most rural states in the country. The rural nature of the state makes reliable infrastructure critical for goods to be transported, people to get to and from work, go to school, shop and access health care centers and to allow for tourism and recreation. This BUILD project will replace or repair bridges in six rural towns, including Stonington, in six of the most rural counties in the country, Hancock being among them. Stonington is the most valuable fishing port in the state, and the volume of seafood transportation traffic, traffic from year-round residents, and traffic from a thriving tourist industry is impressive for such a rural community. Our bridge, built prior to 1940, is critical to our residents and to businesses throughout Maine, and given its current condition, the potential for closure is real. If any of the bridges represented in the grant application are not replaced, this region of the Northeast will see a further decline in financial opportunities, and disadvantage the rest of the region.

I am pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the US Department of Transportation to make these investments. I strongly believe that this region of the country can be competitive on a regional, national and even global scale if the highway bridges are upgraded to ensure resiliency and reliability. But as it stands, the declining condition of the bridges increases risk to the quality of life for the residents of all of these towns, and only serves to expand the rural opportunity gap experienced in this area of Maine.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you please consider funding this project fully with a BUILD grant.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Kathleen M. Billings*  
Town Manager - Stonington

P.O. Box 9

Stonington, Maine 04681-0009

Tel (207) 367-2351 Fax (207) 367-6361

Email: [townmanager@stoningtonmaine.org](mailto:townmanager@stoningtonmaine.org)

<http://www.stoningtonmaine.org>

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please accept this letter in strong support of the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) USDOT BUILD grant application.

As you are aware, the State of Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to its geography, weather, and low population density. Much of Maine is comprised of vast forest land, making it one of the most rural states in the country. This rural nature makes reliable and safe infrastructure a crucial component for U.S. businesses, employment and mobility across the region. This BUILD grant award would allow the replacement of six bridges, one of which is in our region of service. This projects are critical to maintaining the state's highway freight corridors (into, out of, and within the state) which support the majority of the state's freight shipments (including forest products and other heavy bulk commodities).

KVCOG represents a rural region in an already rural state and this BUILD grant would specifically replace one local bridge (Babcock Bridge, #2029) which would allow businesses, residents and tourists to have modern transportation infrastructure that others, in more populous regions, take for granted. This Bridge is part of a primary State road between Kennebec County and the Lewiston-Auburn service centers. If these projects do not occur, the region will experience a decline in financial opportunity, drastically reducing Maine residents' way of life. For these reasons, and many more, we at KVCOG fully support MaineDOT's BUILD grant application.

We are pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation to replace the identified bridges and intersection. We strongly believe that this region of the country cannot be competitive on a regional, national, or global scale, if these improvements to the highway system are not funded. We thank you for your careful review of this application, and respectfully request that you consider fully funding this project in this round of BUILD grant award.

Sincerely,



Laura Cyr  
Executive Director

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments





297 Bath Road  
207-882-5983  
Wiscasset, ME 04578

April 10, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission strongly urges funding of the Maine Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application to replace or repair six key highway bridges in rural locations throughout the State: *Bridging the Economy of Rural Maine*.

Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to our geography, weather and low population density. This is one of the country's most rural regions, making reliable infrastructure critical for goods to be transported, people to get to and from work, go to school, shop and access health care centers and for tourism and recreation. This BUILD project will invest in bridges in six rural towns (Bridgewater, Greenbush, Litchfield, Milo, Southport and Stonington) in six of the most rural counties in the country (Aroostook, Penobscot, Kennebec, Piscataquis, Lincoln and Hancock).

Lincoln County is definitely rural, with a few small historic villages, much woodland and many farms, and hundreds of miles of roads that traverse our rocky coast and countless coves. For some years now, the LCRPC has mapped coastal flooding and worked with communities to look at adaptation of key public infrastructure.

Southport is a bridged island -- the Route 27 bridge (#2789) over Townsend Gut is the only access to the mainland. Residents travel daily to jobs, schools, and health care services. Area residents also come onto the island every day, working in fisheries, boatbuilding, restaurants and lodging, and construction, for example. It is the "oldest" town in the County, with a median age of 65.3 years (20 years older than Maine average age). This island is also a very beautiful place, with tourists and locals enjoying the rocky coast and dense woods, trails, historic sites, and boating facilities.

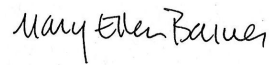
Southport's bridge was built in 1938, and I believe all the bridges are of a similar age. They are all critical to the residents and businesses throughout Maine—and given their current conditions, the potential for closure is real. If the Southport bridge had to be closed, this would require the establishment of a ferry service, which would so inadequately serve this town and region. For the other communities, the resulting detours would in some cases be over an hour. Both of these are clearly unacceptable options, and an unfair burden for these towns. If the bridges are not replaced, this region of the Northeast will see a further decline in economic and community development opportunities.

MaineDOT's proposal to the US Department of Transportation is an excellent and much-appreciated strategy to make these investments. From our work in the County and with economic development partners in the State, I strongly believe that this region of the country cannot be competitive on a regional, national or global scale if these rural highway bridges are not upgraded to ensure resiliency and reliability. The deteriorating condition of the bridges increases risk to the quality of life for the residents and works to further expand the economic opportunity gap experienced in this rural community.



Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission respectfully requests that you consider funding this project fully with a BUILD grant. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ellen Barnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Mary Ellen Barnes  
Executive Director



## Northern Maine Development Commission

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please accept this letter as support for the Maine Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application to replace the Whitney Brook Bridge located on US Route 1 in Bridgewater, Maine.

Built in the 1930s, Whitney Brook Bridge is located on US Route 1, the major north-south corridor in Aroostook County, one of Maine's most rural communities. US Route 1, designated as part of the National Highway System from Houlton to Madawaska, is the major commercial artery serving Aroostook County with other parts of Maine and New England. Heavy truck traffic serving our large mills throughout the region utilize Route 1 daily. Route 1 is also used by residents for daily working or shopping in the region. This route serves Bridgewater's Main Street.

As you are aware, the State of Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to its geography, weather, and population density. Maine is one of the most rural and oldest states in the country making reliable infrastructure critical to everyday life and competition in a global economy. More than ever, Aroostook County needs safe and reliable bridges that allow uninterrupted transportation into and out of the region and to access I-95 located a little further to the south. The Whitney Brook Bridge was constructed before World War II and in a state of significant stress and decay, now is the time for its replacement to ensure Aroostook County is not disadvantaged by costly detours putting undue financial stress which it cannot afford.

I am pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the US Department of Transportation to make these investments. I strongly believe that this region of the country cannot be competitive on a regional, national, or global scale without sound and safe infrastructure and the replacement of this bridge will ensure that resiliency and reliability. The declining condition of this old bridge and so many like it increases risk to the quality of life for residents and works to further expand the rural opportunity gap experienced in Aroostook County.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you please consider funding this project fully with a BUILD grant.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Clark,  
Executive Director

