



PISCATAQUIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

163 EAST MAIN STREET
DOVER-FOXCROFT, ME 04426
(207) 564-6500
(207) 564-3022 (Fax)

James L. White, District 1

James D. Annis, District 2
Thomas Lizotte, County Manager

Wayne Erkkinen, District 3

Oct. 11, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

The Piscataquis County Commissioners are writing this letter as an indication of our strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER IX) grant application to repair three highway bridges in two neighboring rural counties in central Maine.

Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to our geography, weather and low population density. Much of the state is extremely rural, and Maine is one of the most rural states in the country. This reality makes reliable infrastructure critical for residents to get to and from work, go to school, shop and access health care centers. This TIGER IX project will repair three highway bridges, one here in Piscataquis County and two in neighboring Penobscot County. The bridges are Mattawamkeag, Mattawamkeag Bridge 2522; Milo, Pleasant River 3244; and T3 Indian Purchase TWP, West Branch Bridge 3666.

These three bridges are critical to residents in this area for access to I-95 heading north or south, and to access other parts of the state via state roads. One of the bridges, if closed, will cause users to detour approximately 100 miles. This is clearly an unacceptable outcome for both residents traveling for work or pleasure and truck drivers moving freight through the state and into Canada. If these bridges are not rehabilitated, this region of New England will see a further decline in economic opportunities.

Piscataquis County is pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation to repair the quickly declining bridge infrastructure. We believe this region of the country cannot be competitive on a regional, national or global scale if the highway corridors are not upgraded to ensure reliability. The declining condition of these bridges reduces the quality of life for residents and works to further widen the rural opportunity gap experienced in this area of Maine.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you please consider funding this project fully in this ninth round of TIGER funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas Lizotte".

Thomas Lizotte, Piscataquis County Manager