



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0016

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

DAVID A. COLE
COMMISSIONER

September 14, 2009

The Honorable Raymond L. LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to express my strong support for Part A of the TIGER Grant application submitted by the Maine and New Hampshire Departments of Transportation (MaineDOT and NH DOT) in the amount of \$70 million for "Bi-State Memorial Bridge Project" to make improvements to Memorial Bridge connecting Kittery, Maine and Portsmouth, New Hampshire over the Piscataqua River. As the application outlines Part B of the TIGER Grant application in the amount of \$10 million is being submitted by New Hampshire alone.

The Bi-State Memorial Bridge Project is essential to the movement of people and goods in the immediate area, to the transport of materials to and from the Naval Shipyard in Kittery, and to the economy of the metropolitan area. This project will address local and regional multimodal transportation needs, and ensure the continued economic and cultural vitality of the Seacoast region of Maine and New Hampshire. It should also be noted that this bridge provides access to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine, which employs approximately 4,200 civilians and serves as an important economic and national security asset.

The Bi-State Memorial Bridge is largely shovel-ready and in critical need of extensive work, as evidenced by preliminary results of a 2009 detailed bridge inspection. This detailed bridge inspection and load rating report, which will be finalized in a few weeks, was funded by FHWA, MaineDOT and NHDOT. It indicates that the superstructure of the bridge has deteriorated significantly since the previous inspection in 2003 and work must proceed expeditiously, particularly since this bridge serves as the only bicycle and pedestrian access between Kittery and Portsmouth. Memorial Bridge has been posted at 20 tons for over 5 years. It is now posted at 10 tons per the bridge inspection. The remaining bridge service life is estimated to be 5 years or less. Also as a result of the bridge inspection, the adjacent Sarah Mildred Long Bridge is now posted at 20 tons. Heavy trucks must now use the I-95 Piscataqua River Bridge to make local deliveries. As the engineers of the respective Department's of Transportation refine the bridge design details in light of the recent inspection report, MaineDOT and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation will work with affected parties to make sure that all related NEPA documentation is evaluated and updated as needed.



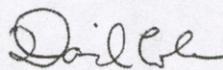
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As you will see in our application, TIGER Grant funds for the Bi-State Memorial Bridge Project will be used to conduct extensive rehabilitation to the bridge, which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This work includes total replacement of the lift structure, decking, and below-deck structural steel, as well as above-deck steel truss rehabilitation. Rehabilitation will also be made to the Kittery Approach Bridge and replacement of the Scott Avenue approach bridge in New Hampshire. Please note, that we have included information in our application about the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge because it too is in imminent need of major investment based on the 2009 bridge inspection and load rating report. Both States agree that the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge is also a priority but the Memorial Bridge project is more ready to move ahead. Without TIGER Grant funding for Memorial Bridge, Maine will be severely challenged in coming up with traditional funding to undertake the necessary work for both bridges at once. As such, the two states have committed to seeking funding in their respective 2012-2013 funding cycles to address the needs of Sarah Mildred Long pending the results of a Maine-New Hampshire Connections Study currently underway. Should the TIGER funding become available, both states will adjust the scope of work and study area for the Connections Study which currently involves both bridges in addition to the I-95 Bridge situated upriver. On the other hand, if TIGER funds are not made available the Connections Study, which is evaluating the need for both local bridges, as well as the types of actions that are most prudent and feasible to take, will continue under its current contract.

This is a significant investment for this area that would fill an important infrastructure need in the States of Maine and New Hampshire, maintain and enhance the quality of life of area residents and promote economic development. I urge your strong consideration of the Bi-State Memorial Bridge Project application submitted for funding under the USDOT TIGER Grant discretionary program.

Sincerely,



David Cole
Commissioner

DAC/KF/jmf