



STATE OF MAINE
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1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

November 17, 2011

Hon. Raymond L. LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Maine Kennebec Bridge Replacement TIGER 3 Grant application submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). MaineDOT is applying for \$10.81 million in TIGER funds for this rural project, to be combined with \$1.64 million in existing Federal funds and matched by \$12.45 million in State funds (yielding a bottom line 50/50 Federal / State partnership).

The project would replace the Maine Kennebec Bridge, which carries State Route 197 over the Kennebec River between the Towns of Richmond and Dresden. Built in 1931, this 10 span bridge is fracture critical (an isolated truss member failure could result in collapse) and is classified as Structurally Deficient by the Federal Highway Administration. Although safe at present, this bridge is near the end of its service life. Detour length without this bridge exceeds 20 miles. In the event that the Sagadahoc Bridge between Bath and Woolwich was out of service, this is the nearest crossing available to Route 1 traffic. Route 1 is essential for tourism as well as getting people to and from work (including Bath Iron Works, a major defense contractor and one of Maine's largest private employers). Other project benefits include:

- improved safety due to geometric improvements
- creation of over 1000 job years of employment during construction
- elimination of a movable bridge, saving an estimated \$100,000 per year
- reduced impediment to Coast Guard icebreakers and other marine traffic
- improved conditions for bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the new bridge (the existing has no shoulders).

This project will address a significant unfunded bridge need in central Maine, improve safety and promote economic development. I urge your strong consideration of this project submitted for funding under the US DOT TIGER 3 Grant discretionary program.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor
State of Maine



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