



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

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

May 22, 2015

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I am writing to express my strong support for the TIGER 2015 grant application submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation for funding to replace the Beals Island Bridge that connects the towns of Beals and Jonesport, Maine.

The Beals Island Bridge carries Bridge Street over the Moosabec Reach. Constructed in 1958, it is currently in disrepair with structural deficiencies, poor sight distance for turning trucks and inadequate width. The new bridge will address transportation, economic and safety needs for the communities and the fishery by, among other things, widening the bridge from its current 22 feet to 28 feet. This in turn will allow commercial vehicles, school buses, and emergency vehicles to more safely navigate the bridge. The wider bridge will also better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians with its four-foot shoulders (the current bridge is not safe for them). This is an important feature for the towns and is in keeping with national trends towards building Green Communities and ensuring Safe Routes to Schools.

The cost for the bridge replacement construction and construction engineering is estimated at \$20.55 million. MaineDOT is seeking a TIGER grant in the amount of \$10.275 million. This is a 50% non-Federal match.

The Beals Island Bridge needs to be replaced. Several of the piles that support the bridge have severe section loss, with one pile being severed. The new bridge – the only road access to the island – would support the regional economy, small businesses and the fishery in particular. TIGER funding would complete the overall funding package. Please give your strong consideration to this project.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Jonesport-Beals - Beals Island Bridge #5500 - Bridge Street over Moosabec Reach

Existing Bridge - Beal Island Bridge (#5500) was built in 1958. It is the only crossing that connects the island and town of Beals with the mainland at Jonesport. A Coast Guard station is located at the NW corner of the bridge. The bridge width is 22 feet and it has 10 spans at 105 feet each for a total length of 1,050 feet. At the navigational channel, vertical clearance is 39 feet and horizontal clearance is 75 feet between timber fenders.

Existing Condition - MaineDOT's latest inspection report listed the deck and superstructure condition as fair. The substructure rating was recently lowered to poor condition noting that the steel H-piles are deteriorating at an accelerated rate. The bridge is classified as structurally deficient.

Proposed Bridge - The alternatives evaluation identified a new bridge as the best long-term solution for this crossing. The new bridge will include eight prestressed concrete girder spans supported by concrete piers with drilled shaft foundations and concrete abutments.

Funding - The total estimated project cost is \$22 million. The project is partially funded in the current Work Plan, with \$9.7 million programmed for construction in 2016/17.

TIGER grant candidacy - This project is a good TIGER grant candidate for the following reasons:

- Rural Setting and Connectivity
 - The bridge is the only connection between the island community of Beals and the small mainland town of Jonesport
 - Both towns have small populations and villages with strong connections and dependency on the lobstering and fishing industry and on tourism
- Navigational way and maritime resource
 - Active USCG station adjacent to bridge
 - Shellfish habitat in Moosabec Reach as evidenced by the abundant lobster trap buoys
 - Working docks and wharfs that support the local lobstering and fishing industry are located on both sides of bridge
- New bridge advantages include improved mobility, lower maintenance and repair costs, enhanced durability, increased safety, and simplified inspection, including:
 - Wider roadway and shoulders on bridge and causeway approaches to accommodate more users including oversize loads, buses, and bicyclists
 - A reduction in number of obstructions to watercraft under the bridge
 - Concrete superstructure elements which do not require expensive coating maintenance and related traffic closures
 - Crash-resistant bridge railings with proper heights to accommodate annual gathering of pedestrians to view lobster boat races and other annual events along the waterway
 - An alignment that maintains traffic and vessel navigation during construction
 - Improved utility connections between the communities
 - Potential use of innovative materials for the piers, such as FRP and/or composite casings/jackets for the piles (currently under investigation)
- Local sources of stone available for potential use in causeway construction
- Improved roadside safety and geometrics at approaches consisting of barriers, curve and shoulder improvements to accommodate and large trucks and reduce lane encroachments
- Minimal ROW impacts
- Potential ocean bottom restoration area to mitigate total impacts associated with causeway widening