

TOWN OF BEALS
Office of the Selectmen
11 Big Pond Road
P.O. Box 189
Beals, Maine 04611

May 12, 2015

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

Dear Secretary Foxx:

It is our understanding that the Maine Department of Transportation is preparing an application for the 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to be submitted in the coming weeks and is accepting letters of support to that end. Therefore, we selectmen of the Town of Beals are writing to express our strong support for Federal funding to help defray the \$21.98 million anticipated cost of replacing the Beals Bridge.

Connecting Beals Island with Jonesport on the mainland, the existing bridge has well served the citizens of the Moosabec region and the general public since its construction in 1957. For a small community, the record reveals significant use during its existence, with 127,566 people using the bridge in its first full year of service, and a current average daily traffic count of more than 2,000 today (8% percent of which is heavy trucks). The increased traffic on this only roadway access to Beals Island, along with time, has taken its toll on this aging structure, which reached its 50-year lifespan seven years ago. Adequate at the time of its construction, the bridge's narrow deck width is currently inadequate for today's mix of large truck traffic, busses, passenger vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian passage.

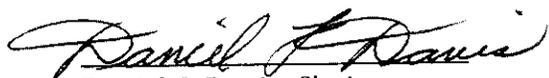
With the construction of a new bridge, the flow of traffic would be further benefited with proposed safety improvements and widening of the acute intersection at the Beals end of the bridge, which traditionally has caused great difficulty for the maneuverability of larger vehicles, resulting in several accidents over the past few years. Although the deck and superstructure of the bridge are in fair condition at present, periodic DOT inspections reveal the pier piles are in poor condition, with severe loss of structural integrity in several locations. Due to its present condition, it is imperative that replacement be accomplished as soon as possible.

The benefits of a new bridge to our island community and the public would be immeasurable, including increased confidence in traveling to and from Beals over a wider and safer structure, with an incentive toward increased tourism, especially as it relates to Nature Conservancy

lands on adjoining Great Wass Island and the town's Backfield Park. One local realtor has stated that the old bridge, in its deteriorated condition, has had a negative impact on the local real estate market, which should improve with the availability of better and safer transportation. Local trucking and commercial businesses will benefit greatly with wider travel lanes and unimpeded access to the island's roadways at the intersection of Bridge Street and Bay View Drive. In addition, the local citizens' concerns regarding student transportation to and from the island will be greatly diminished.

We ask that you please consider TIGER funding in support of this worthwhile and much needed project as an investment in the future economic growth and stability of the Moosabec region.

Sincerely,



Daniel F. Davis, Chairman



Clara E. Smith



Mariner N. Bunker

Board of Selectmen
Town of Beals