

Monday, March 11, 2024

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

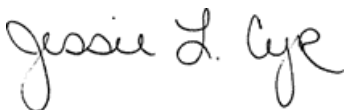
Please accept this letter of strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) grant application titled *I-95 Accessibility Improvements Minimizing Heavy-truck Impacts Project (I-95 AIM HI)* ("Project"), requesting U.S. Department of Transportation Bridge Investment Program (BIP) funding. The application outlines MaineDOT's important plans to replace six aging overpasses carrying rural local and collector roads over Interstate 95 near Augusta, Maine. The bridges are on the National Bridge Inventory and each overpass, built in the 1950s, contains outdated characteristics including insufficient vertical clearance that creates risk for trucks and concerns for motorists.

The new bridges will meet today's geometric design standards, including the height of vertical clearances. They will employ safety improvements for motorists traveling on and over the interstate. The work will improve the condition, safety, geometry, reliability, and economy of Maine's primary transportation route and eliminate the threat of a full bridge closure should excess-height trucks strike an overpass.

The bridges provide vital connections and link numerous rural communities in Kennebec County, Maine, to service centers, helping rural residents meet every-day needs. The Project is a MaineDOT priority and is consistent with the BIP goal of reducing the number of bridges in fair condition that will degrade to poor condition in the next three years. The Project will also restore bridges to a state of good repair without consuming additional right-of-way.

Kennebec Council of Governments represents municipalities in Kennebec, Somerset and Western Waldo Counties who all depend on I-95 as a main transportation corridor. Incidents of excess-height trucks traveling on I-95 and hitting an overpass have caused major disruptions to both the local traffic traveling on the collector/local road over I-95 and the commercial and local traffic traveling on I-95. We are very pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from USDOT to help fund these critical improvements to the state's primary transportation corridor. We respectfully request that you fund this Project under the BIP discretionary grant program. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jessie L. Cyr
Economic and Community Development Specialist
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
(860) 208-3647 (mobile)
(207) 453-4258 Ext. 220 (office)
jcyr@kvcog.org