Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 28, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

We write in support of a joint TIGER VI application by the New Hampshire and Maine Departments of Transportation for $25 million to replace the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge connecting Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Kittery, Maine.

The Sarah Mildred Long Bridge is a crucial, multi-modal component of the transportation system linking the seacoasts of New Hampshire and Maine for both automobile traffic and freight rail and allowing for the passage of cargo vessels into the Port of New Hampshire. For automobile traffic, the bridge is a critical alternate route should the high-level bridge carrying Interstate 95 over the Piscataqua River be closed or its capacity reduced. Additionally, the rail line running on the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge directly supports the safe and efficient removal of nuclear waste from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, a major area employer with a regional economic impact exceeding $1 billion annually.

This critical piece of infrastructure has been closed numerous times for major repairs over the last five years, regularly disrupting residents and businesses in both states. More concerning, the Bridge is rated structurally deficient and requires immediate replacement to preserve public safety and support the continued economic vitality of New Hampshire's seacoast region. The importance of this project is further demonstrated by the commitment that the states of New Hampshire and Maine have made to work together and in partnership with stakeholders such as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to identify a significant percentage of the resources needed to replace the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge.

However, TIGER funding remains essential to the timely completion of this important multi-modal and multi-state effort. With federal support, New Hampshire and Maine will construct a new bridge that will safely carry automobile and freight rail traffic and enable larger, modern cargo vessels to access the Port of New Hampshire, ensuring the Port's continued viability. In addition to these critical functions, the new Sarah Mildred Long Bridge will also include elements to improve livability and walkability by better connecting the bridge with local neighborhoods, ultimately leading to increased economic development in the area.

We support the New Hampshire and Maine Departments of Transportation in their application for competitive grant funding from the TIGER program and urge that you afford their proposal all due consideration. Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senator

Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress