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State of Maine
ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

April 11, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Maine State Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Transportation (Committee) recently voted unanimously to provide its support for the \$25 million TIGER 2014 grant application submitted by the State of Maine in partnership with the State of New Hampshire to complete the rail portion of the Sarah Mildred Long (SML) Bridge replacement. As the legislative Committee with jurisdiction over transportation matters in the State of Maine, we are very cognizant of the need for this bridge to be replaced, as it is crucial not only to Maine's economy, but also to national security.

This bridge serves as a vital link between the states of Maine and New Hampshire, via the Route 1 bypass over the Piscataqua River. Unfortunately, the bridge is in dire need of replacement, as it is nearly three quarters of a century old, considered structurally deficient, posted for 20 tons and the subject of numerous malfunctions and repairs. If the bridge is not replaced, it will likely have to be closed by 2020. The closure of a bridge serving such critical functions for both states, including as an emergency bypass route in the event of a temporary or long-term closure of the I-95 High Level Bridge, would be especially difficult. Combined, the SML Bridge and I-95 High Level Bridge account for 62% of all commercial vehicle traffic crossing Maine's borders, and provide over \$8.4 billion in economic impact to Maine annually. With the SML Bridge posted, any temporary closure of the I-95 High Level Bridge would result in a 21 mile detour.

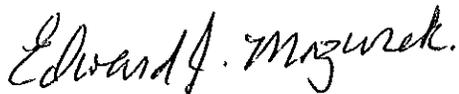
The Committee also felt it was important to stress the special national security role the rail portion of the bridge plays, as this is the piece for which Maine is seeking funding. The SML Bridge carries the Pan-Am Railways line over the river and connects the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNS) to the national railway system. PNS is responsible for the overhaul, repair and modernization of Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered submarines. The rail portion of the bridge is the only means PNS can safely and securely transfer spent nuclear fuel from its servicing of nuclear submarines.

In terms of economic impacts, if the bridge is not replaced, the current workload at PNS could be jeopardized. PNS currently employs about 5,300 middle class workers with a \$361 million annual payroll. PNS also expends about \$67.5 million annually in contracted facility services. A June 2012 economic impact analysis noted this facility has a \$1.6 billion/year overall economic impact for the region.

Loss of the rail connection would not only affect national security but could also result in a large loss of work for middle class workers, and a have major negative economic impact to the region.

TIGER funding for the rail portion of the bridge is essential to the overall replacement project, as it is more flexible than the formula funding from FHWA and FRA, which are not available for the rail portion of the project. These TIGER funds will enhance the quality of life for residents of both states, promote economic development, and is one of the only sources of funding to replace the deck that carries rail across the bridge to the shipyard. The Committee urges your approval of the SML Bridge TIGER 2014 application.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Mazurek
Senate Chair



Charles Kenneth Theriault
House Chair