



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

April 14, 2014

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 2014 grant application for \$25 million submitted by the State of Maine in partnership with the State of New Hampshire to complete the rail portion of a larger project to replace the Sarah Mildred Long (SML) Bridge. You may be aware that Maine, again in partnership with New Hampshire submitted this same application in 2013 for a TIGER grant. We are resubmitting it as the need is even more imminent than it was last year.

The SML Bridge carries the U.S. Route 1 Bypass over the Piscataqua River between Kittery, Maine and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The bridge is 74 years old, is structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. The truss spans on the bridge are Fracture Critical, meaning that failure of certain steel tension members could result in failure of the entire structure. Due to its condition, SML has been posted at 20 tons (small pickup trucks and cars only) since 2009. The bridge has been closed multiple times in recent years due to malfunctions and for unplanned major repairs. It needs to be replaced.

It is especially important to note that 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 the nuclear submarines. It is therefore critical that the bridge be replaced in order to maintain the needs of national security.

If the bridge is not replaced, the future viability of PNS' current workload 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 major negative economic impact to the region.

The flexibility of TIGER funding for the rail portion of the bridge is critical to the overall replacement project. Formula funding from FHWA and FRA are not available for the rail



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portion of the project. Without replacement, we expect the bridge could no longer be maintained in a safe condition, even with major maintenance funding and would likely close by 2020. In addition to severely impacting PNS and the regional economy, closure of SML would have dramatic negative effects on the capacity of the I-95 High Level Bridge, Maine's only interstate connection. SML closure would result in traffic volumes in excess of capacity of the I-95 High Level Bridge. The I-95 bridge would experience sustained traffic delays, particularly on summer weekends and other high traffic volume days.

The SML Bridge plays a critical role for both states by serving as the emergency bypass route in the event of temporary or long-term closure of the I-95 High Level Bridge. These two bridges combined account for 62% of all commercial vehicle traffic crossing Maine 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.

This investment of 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. I urge your strong consideration of the SML Bridge TIGER application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul R. LePage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Paul R. LePage
Governor