



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

MARGARET WOOD HASSAN  
Governor

April 16, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Sarah Mildred Long Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I am writing in support of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's joint request with the Maine Department of Transportation for a Transportation Investment Generating Economy Recovery (TIGER) VI grant for construction of the rail portion of a larger project to replace the Sarah Mildred Long (SML) Bridge.

The SML Bridge carries the Route 1 Bypass over the Piscataqua River between Kittery, Maine, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It also carries the Pan-Am Railways line over the river to connect with the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNSY), which 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 to service the PNSY with mission-critical materials and the rail line plays a crucial role in the ability of the Shipyard to carry out its mission in support of national defense. The PNSY has about 5,300 employees, a \$361-million payroll and \$67.5 million in contracted facility services. A June 2012 economic impact analysis noted that the base has an annual \$1.6 billion overall economic impact for the region.

Built in 1940, the SML Bridge is currently 74 years old. An inspection in 2009 found the bridge to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. As a result of that inspection, traffic is limited to 20 tons, essentially passenger vehicles and small pick ups only. 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. The bridge has been closed multiple times in recent years due to malfunctions and for unplanned major repairs. As a result of recent inspections and continued deterioration, state maintenance workers have been working this spring to install temporary shoring to keep the bridge in service and maintain the 20-ton posting. In light of these difficulties, the SML Bridge needs to be replaced.

Without replacement, we expect the bridge could no longer be maintained in a safe condition, even with major maintenance funding. Formula funding from FHWA and FRA are not available for the rail portion of the project, so if TIGER funding cannot be obtained for the rail portion of the bridge, it will likely close before 2020. This would have dramatic negative effects on the ability of the Shipyard to service submarines, as well as the capacity of the I-95 High Level Bridge, which would experience sustained traffic delays on summer weekends and other high-traffic volume days.

The SML Bridge plays an important national security role for the PNSY, is an economic engine for Maine and New Hampshire, and serves as the back-up bridge for the I-95 High Level Bridge. The I-95 High Level Bridge and the SML Bridge contribute more than \$8 billion in economic impact to the region annually, and with the SML Bridge currently posted for just cars and light trucks, any temporary closure of the I-95 High Level Bridge would result in a 21-mile detour.

This investment will enhance 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. Because the SML Bridge is so important to national defense, our region's economy, and the high quality of life of our people, this project has my full support.

If I can provide any additional assistance or information, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thank you for your consideration.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margie H" followed by a long horizontal line.

Margaret Wood Hassan  
Governor