



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
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04333-0001

August 30, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to submit this letter in strong support of the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) application for funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation 2022 Bridge Investment Program (BIP). MaineDOT's project, *U.S. Route 202/Interstate 95 Interchange Bridge Replacement and Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project*, proposes to replace the 67-year-old Western Avenue overpass in Augusta which carries U.S. Route 202/State Route 17 over Interstate 95. This 6-lane span carries more than 28,000 vehicles daily over more than 34,000 vehicles traversing the interstate below.

This project is needed as the current structure poses significant safety issues including insufficient vertical clearance for safe freight passage on I-95. The bridge has substandard clearance of 14.3 feet which makes it vulnerable to being struck which could significantly disrupt traffic at this busy crossing. This project proposes a new bridge that will have a higher clearance and contain a number of improvements to the interstate ramps and the adjacent intersection with Whitten Road.

The *U.S. Route 202/Interstate 95 Interchange Bridge Replacement and Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project* will also address the current safety problem of the narrow shoulders and functionally-obsolete sidewalks that exists on the current bridge. The new structure will incorporate wider sidewalks and modern, FHWA-compliant crosswalks so vulnerable roadway users can move safely through the project area and will be connected to the adjacent existing sidewalk system.

I am pleased that MaineDOT has made this overpass a priority in Maine's capital city. Due to its heavy traffic counts and importance to freight movement in central Maine, I am hopeful you will give the application your full consideration and grant MaineDOT the funding they are seeking. Please do not hesitate to contact me or MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note should you have any questions regarding this letter or the project.

Respectfully,

Janet T. Mills
Governor, State of Maine



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