

SUSAN M. COLLINS
MAINE

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

December 13, 2018

COMMITTEES:
SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING,
CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to express my strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Competitive Highway Bridge Program. Through its proposal, titled the "Franklin County Bridges Project," MaineDOT seeks to repair a network of three bridges in rural Maine to address local transportation needs and improve economic opportunities for the region.

Maine faces unique challenges as a rural state, particularly in terms of maintaining a reliable infrastructure system. All three of the bridges identified for this project have been deemed structurally deficient. If the bridges were to close, the potential detours would range from 11 to 179 miles, which would impede residents and place unnecessary hardships on industries in western Maine. The Maine forest industry relies heavily on these transportation networks to move products around the state and to destinations across the country and world.

If selected for funding, MaineDOT has identified three communities, all in Franklin County, that would greatly benefit from the key investments of this project. Focusing on these communities will ensure an uninterrupted supply chain for businesses in the region and provide improved access to Maine's outdoor recreational resources. The cost to replace the bridges is estimated at \$10.8 million. MaineDOT is seeking assistance in the amount of \$8.4 million, which represents 80% of all costs to complete the project.

I believe that MaineDOT's Franklin County Bridges Project will help provide safe and efficient access to this region of Maine for residents, tourists, and industries alike. As evidenced by the grant proposal, MaineDOT has demonstrated its determination to repair Maine's rapidly declining bridge infrastructure. The project will therefore advance this mission and expand economic opportunity in western Maine while improving the quality of life for its residents.

Thank you for your time and attention to MaineDOT's proposal. I respectfully request your careful consideration of this application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that your staff please notify Cameron O'Brien on my staff at (202) 224-2523 when a final decision is made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1902

November 21, 2018

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of the Maine Department of Transportation's application for their Franklin County Bridges Project through the US Department of Transportation's Competitive Highway Bridge Program. The Franklin County Bridges Project – which this funding would support, if awarded – seeks to replace three bridges in three communities throughout Franklin County.

The three bridges that are scheduled for replacement have been deemed structurally deficient and are a key connection in rural Franklin County, which is critical for Maine's transportation network. The region is incredibly important for Maine as it is used heavily by the lumber industry, residents, and tourists who use these bridges to connect to Maine's vast outdoor recreational opportunities. The project will replace three bridges in Chesterville/Farmington, Wilton, and Jim Pond Township in Northern Franklin County. These bridges are critical for residents in these communities, as the detours for the bridges are between 11 and 179 miles one way. These communities lie in a rural region of Maine, and they certainly face a unique set of challenges when maintaining infrastructure. This grant would be a positive investment for the region that would ensure an uninterrupted supply chain as well as maintaining access for Maine's tourists.

The Franklin County Bridges Project that this funding would aid will address local transportation needs and improve economic opportunities for the region. The cost to replace these three bridges is estimated at \$10.8 million. MaineDOT is seeking assistance for \$8.4 million which represents 80% of all costs to complete the project. Investments like this are critical for Maine to be competitive on regional, national, and global scale moving towards the future. A safe, efficient, and reliable infrastructure network is imperative to Maine's success.

The proposed project will greatly benefit Mainers in Franklin County. I truly appreciate the Maine Department of Transportation's initiative in submitting this grant proposal. Therefore, I respectfully request the full funding of their application and ask that you please notify Corenna Quirk, my District Director, at Corenna.Quirk@mail.house.gov when a final decision has been made. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Bruce Poliquin



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

26 November 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write in strong support of the Maine Department of Transportation's efforts in seeking assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Competitive Highway Bridge Program for fiscal year 2018. This project would replace a network of three key highway bridges in rural Maine, all of which have been deemed structurally deficient and in need of replacement in order to avoid closure.

As you know, much of Maine is rural, which creates unique infrastructure challenges. Having a reliable transportation infrastructure is critical for Maine residents. These three bridges are vital to the residents in their area. A closure of any one of the bridges would create a detour of 11 to 179 miles, which could prove extremely detrimental to not only the economic vitality of this region of Maine, but also to the residents who rely on these structures in the event of an emergency.

This area of the state provides an abundance of outdoor recreational options for both Maine residents and tourists visiting our state. Closure of any one of these three bridges would have devastating effects on this industry. These bridges also provide access to rural forestlands in Maine, which are essential to the forest industry. This industry, while unfortunately in decline, is still a great driver of the Maine economy. It generates more than 33,000 jobs across the state and has an \$8.5 billion total economic impact.

The cost to replace these three bridges is estimated at \$10.8 million. MaineDOT is seeking assistance for \$8.4 million which represents 80% of all costs to complete the project.

I thank you for your time, and respectfully request that you look favorably upon the application submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation, understanding how critical these bridges are to the residents that utilize them daily and to all of Franklin County.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor, State of Maine



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

TTY USERS CALL 711
www.maine.gov



*3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04330-0003*

November 26, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of the Maine Department of Transportation's efforts to secure funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Competitive Highway Bridge Program for fiscal year 2018. The Franklin County Bridges project seeks to replace three existing bridges across Franklin County. This project will have a positive impact on my district and will provide a safe and reliable infrastructure moving forward.

There are many challenges facing transportation in Maine. One of the most important is the ability to maintain a reliable infrastructure system. This is particularly relevant in the region I represent as a member of the Maine State Legislature. The communities impacted, which are in rural Franklin County, would benefit greatly from the investment proposed by the Franklin County Bridges project. The work being done will ensure that vital links are available to Maine's lumber and shipping industries as well as providing access to outdoor recreational resources around the state.

If selected, MaineDOT will use the funds to replace three structurally deficient bridges. These bridges are crucial to the local economy and Maine simply cannot afford the adverse effects of closing even one. Alternative routes are not simple, and detours would range between 11 and 179 miles. Not only would this be detrimental to the residents in this county, it would also hurt the forest industry, which relies on the bridges to transport lumber and reach mills across western Maine. The bridges identified in the proposed project act as gateways between tourists and Maine's vast outdoor recreation opportunities.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully request your favorable consideration of MaineDOT's Franklin County Bridges Project application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom".

Tom Saviello
State Senator



FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

November 7, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

The Franklin County Commissioners are writing this letter as an indication of our strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation grant application for the U.S. Department of Transportation Competitive Highway Bridge Program to repair three highway bridges in Franklin County.

Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to our geography, weather and low population density. Much of the state is extremely rural, and Franklin County is one of the most rural counties in the state. This reality makes reliable infrastructure critical for residents to get to and from work, school, shop and access health care centers. This project will repair three highway bridges, Farmington Falls 2273 in Chesterville, Alder Stream 3265 in Jim Pond Township and the Hall Bridge 2341 in Wilton.

Franklin County is pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation to repair the quickly declining bridge infrastructure. We believe this region of the country cannot be competitive on a regional, national or global scale if the highway corridors are not upgraded to ensure reliability. The declining condition of these bridges reduces the quality of life for residents and works to further widen the rural opportunity gap experienced in western Maine.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you consider funding this project fully for fiscal year 2018.

Sincerely,

Julie Magoon,
Franklin County Clerk

140 MAIN STREET, SUITE 3 · FARMINGTON, MAINE 04938 · (207) 778-6614

TERRY BRANN
District #1

CHARLES WEBSTER
District #2

CLYDE BARKER
District #3

JULIE MAGOON
County Clerk
jmagoon@franklincountymaine.gov

Town of Chesterville

Office of the Selectmen
409 Dutch Gap Rd
Chesterville, ME 04938

November 15, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

It is our understanding that the Maine Department of Transportation is preparing an application for a TIGER grant to help with the cost of replacing the Farmington Falls Bridge. Therefore, we selectmen of the town of Chesterville are writing in support of Federal funding for this vital project.

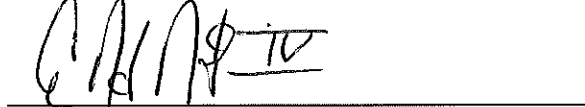
The concrete bridge was built in 1931 and is in need of serious repair. The bridge serves necessary connector between three major arteries: RT 41, RT 2 and RT 156. The average daily traffic count over this bridge is 4,270 with 8% of that from heavy truck traffic. Our Regional School District relies on the bridge to transport students back and forth several times a day to elementary, middle and high schools.

We ask that you consider the TIGER funding in support of this worthwhile and much needed project, as an investment in the safety of the residents and travelers in this region.

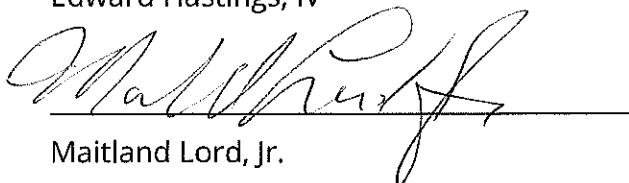
Sincerely,



Matthew Welch



Edward Hastings, IV




Maitland Lord, Jr.

Board of Selectmen
Town of Chesterville



Tiffany Estabrook



Allan Mackey

Town of Farmington

153 Farmington Falls Road, Farmington, Maine 04938

Tel: 207-778-6538 Fax: 207-778-5871

E-mail: info@farmington-maine.org

TDD (Emergency): 911 / TDD (Administration): 207-778-5873



November 21, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

It is my understanding that the Maine Department of Transportation is preparing an application for a Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP) grant to help with the cost of replacing the Farmington Falls Bridge. I am therefore writing on behalf of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Farmington in support of Federal funding for this vital project.

The existing concrete bridge was built in 1931 and is in need of serious repair. The bridge serves as a necessary connector between three major arteries: U.S. Route 2, State Route 41 and State Route 156. The average daily traffic count over this bridge is 4,270 with 8% of that from heavy truck traffic. Our Regional School District relies on the bridge to transport students back and forth several times a day to elementary and middle schools and high school.

We ask that you consider the CHBP funding in support of this worthwhile and much needed project, as an investment in the safety of the residents and travelers in this region. Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Davis
Town Manager

cc: Farmington Board of Selectmen



Town of Wilton

158 Weld Road
Wilton, ME 04294
Tel. (207)-645-4961
Fax. (207) 645-2001

November 30, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Board of Selectpersons for the Town of Wilton, I submit this letter of support for the Hall Bridge project over Hooper Brook in Wilton. The existing bridge is in disrepair and in need of replacement. The deck and superstructure of the bridge are in poor condition and in a state of advanced deterioration.

The existing bridge is on US Rt. 2/ME Rt. 17 and is the main thoroughfare for all traffic between eastern Maine, heading to western Maine and New Hampshire. It is the major route for all commercial traffic traveling this area, with no satisfactory alternative routes. Hall Bridge is located in one of Wilton's small Village areas with a number of homes, the fire station, farms, Post Office and a Church located near the bridge, and is essential for access to these establishments.

The Wilton Board of Selectpersons voted unanimously at their November 29th meeting to support this project. Thank you for the opportunity, on behalf of the Town of Wilton, to express our support for funding of Hall Bridge in Wilton, Maine, through the U.S. Department of Transportation Competitive Highway Bridge Program.

Sincerely,

Rhonda L. Irish
Town Manager
Town of Wilton



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Lands LLC
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
Hancock Lumber
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
Innovative Natural
Resource Solutions
J.D. Irving
JM Cote Co.
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
LandVest Inc.
Limington Lumber
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Pleasant River Lumber
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Verso Paper
Wadsworth Woodlands
W.T. Gardner & Sons
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser

Nov. 30, 2018

Secretary Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for Maine Department of Transportation application for a Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP) for Fiscal Year 2018

Dear Secretary Chao,

The Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC), is a not-for-profit trade association that has represented the diverse needs of Maine's forest products community since 1961. We speak for logging contractors, sawmills, paper mills, biomass energy, facilities, pellet manufacturers, furniture manufacturers, and on behalf of more than eight million acres of commercial forestland in Maine.

Maine's forest products industry has an \$8.5 billion impact on our state's economy, according to 2016 research by the University of Maine.

Safe, reliable transportation is essential not only for our industry, but for the rural communities where most of our workers live. That's why we strongly support Maine's application to fund projects to replace three structurally deficient bridges in Franklin. These bridges are all prioritized for replacement by MaineDOT.

Franklin County Bridges Project: Maine's forest products industry is the source of 3,351 jobs (direct and indirect) in Franklin County. Verso Paper in Jay, which employs about 400 people, is one of largest employers in the county and attracts workers from across the region. Stratton Lumber is located just off Route 27 in Eustis. Franklin County also is home to a number of wood manufacturing mills.

Our workers are traveling daily over these bridges:

- **Hall Bridge**, on State Routes 2 and 17 over Hooper (Butterfield) Brook in Wilton, is critical for the flow of wood and products. It is a primary route for wood/chips to ND Paper, EJ Carrier Chip Plant and Irving-Dixfield. The bridge also is used by trucks transporting wood to Verso, Pallet One and Sappi, as well as logs headed to Canada.
- **Alder Stream Bridge**, on State Route 27 over Alder Stream in Jim Pond Twp., is a significant route for wood/products going to and from Canada. American Forest Management and Weyerhaeuser send a lot of wood over the bridge. Stratton Lumber/Fontaine mills also receives logs and lumber. ND Paper, Sappi and Verso also receive pulp and residue chips.

- **Farmington Falls Bridge**, on State Route 41 over the Sandy River in Chesterville/Farmington, is used as a Route 2 bypass of Farmington via Route 156, which peels off of Route 41 on the south end of the bridge, to Wilton. It is by small woodlot owners and loggers.

Since logging trucks transport tremendous quantities of wood and equipment in order to cut, bring wood, bring it to mills and move our products to markets, it's essential that these bridges safely support both heavy trucks and passenger vehicles.

Replacing these aging bridges is not only critical for our industry, but for everyone who lives in these somewhat remote areas, because without them we could not:

- Maintain access to critical health facilities and for emergency responders
- Connect to regional services
- Provide access for business and recreation
- Encourage and facilitate economic growth.

In short, these bridges connect people to their jobs, the services they need, the schools they attend, the markets for their products and even the food they eat. They also connect our industry to forests, manufacturing facilities and markets. That's why our state and our industry asks your support for MaineDOT's grant application for a Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP) for Fiscal Year 2018.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Wood processed in Franklin County in 2017	
Product	Green tons
Sawlogs	21,719
Pulpwood	483,201
Piomass	237,410
Firewood and pellets	6,145
Hog fuel*	47,864
Source: 2017 Wood Processor Report, Maine Forest Service	
*Wood byproduct or waste that can be burned for fuel but can't be categorized as chips, shavings, bark, or sawdust.	

December 14, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Chao,

My name is Tony Ouellette and I am the Managing Director of Sappi North America's Somerset Paper Mill located in Skowhegan, Maine. The Somerset mill is one of the largest pulp and paper manufacturing sites in North America, employing over 750 full time employees and producing over 850,000 tons annually of paper and packaging material for sale across the globe. We have recently spent over \$200 million on captial improvements to our site and plan to be here producing quality products for decades to come.

We receive over 400 trucks of raw material (wood, chemicals, and other operating supplies used to make our products) and ship approximately 75 tractor trailers of wood-based material to customers and warehouses every day. Needless to say, we depend on safe, reliable, and well-maintained roads to make this happen.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is seeking funding (\$8.4 Million, 80% of the total project cost)) from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Competitive Highway Bridge Program for fiscal year 2018.

The funding will support the replacement of three structurally deficient bridges in Franklin County. They are the Farmington Falls Bridge on State Route 41 over the Sandy River in Chesterville/Farmington, the Alder Stream Bridge on State Route 27 over Alder Stream in Jim Pond Twp., and the Hall Bridge on State Routes 2 & 17 over Hooper (Butterfield) Brook in Wilton. These bridges are all prioritized for replacement by MaineDOT but presently there is not enough funding to complete replacements for all bridges where it is needed.

Each of these roads is used by our suppliers to access the mill on a daily basis and in some cases these are the only practical routes to our site. Since we are located in a rural part of the country, our options for access are limited and we are very supportive of any improvement work executed on the infrastructure around our mill.

The employees of Sappi and all of the local community would be grateful for your consideration of the crucial funding being requested by the Maine DOT.

Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me with any additional questions or information.



Tony Ouellette
Managing Director – Somerset Mill
(207)238-3368 anthony.ouellette@sappi.com