

SUSAN M. COLLINS
MAINE

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

December 13, 2018

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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 "I-295 Bridges Project," MaineDOT seeks to replace four bridges in two communities along the I-295 highway, which is a major thoroughway in Maine's transportation network.

As a large and mostly rural state, Maine faces unique infrastructure challenges. The I-295 corridor runs through one of the fastest growing parts of the state, which has resulted in significant traffic growth. Such an increase puts a heavy strain on the capacity of the highway, creating congestion while reducing reliability and safety. This project therefore proposes upgrades to four bridges in the Towns of Freeport and Yarmouth in areas of I-295 where traffic is heaviest.

If selected for funding, the new proposed bridges would be built to handle future increases in traffic growth. The project would also enable safety improvements on the bridges for pedestrians and bicyclists, which would make the system friendlier for all users. The total cost to replace these four bridges is estimated at \$32.9 million. MaineDOT is seeking assistance in the amount of \$26 million, which represents 80% of all future costs to complete the project.

I believe that MaineDOT's I-295 Bridges Project will help provide safe and efficient access to Maine along a critical corridor. As evidenced by the department's proposal, MaineDOT is committed to repairing Maine's rapidly declining bridges. It is necessary to improve our infrastructure's sustainability and our state's ability to remain competitive, making these upgrades pivotal to ensuring the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system.

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



HELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT, MAINE

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 of support for the Maine Department of Transportation's application for their I-295 Bridges Project through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Competitive Highway Bridge Program. The I-295 Bridges Project—which this funding would support if awarded—seeks to replace four bridges in two communities along Maine's I-295 corridor.

The four bridges that are scheduled for replacement have been deemed structurally deficient and are a part of the I-295 corridor, a critical for Maine's transportation network. The corridor is crucial for Mainers as it is a heavily used route for shipping, commuters, and tourists alike. Maine is quickly growing along this corridor and it is necessary to adjust for the future to ensure that our infrastructure is still safe, reliable, and efficient moving forward.

The project looks to replace four bridges in Freeport and Yarmouth. Each of the bridges is a key link to the interstate system in Maine, as they are a part of the interchanges. These communities lie in the northern section of the I-295 corridor and have seen a considerable amount of growth as Maine develops. In the northern section of the corridor, the growth is a combination of three things: growth centered in Portland, growth in the suburban regions in the greater area, and increases in through traffic.

If nothing is done to mitigate the negative impacts of traffic growth on our infrastructure system, Maine could see harmful effects. Traffic growth can strain the capacity of the highway and create congestion while reducing reliability and safety. MaineDOT plans to mitigate these concerns through the I-295 Bridges Project.

I am pleased at the initiative being taken by the Maine Department of Transportation to address the needs of Maine's infrastructure system. I gladly support the efforts of MaineDOT and respectfully request the favorable consideration of their application.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chellie R".

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



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 submit this letter in support of the Maine Department of Transportation's efforts in seeking assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Competitive Highway Bridge Program for fiscal year 2018. The planned project would replace four critical highway bridges in southern Maine, all of which have been deemed structurally deficient and require near-term replacement.

All four of these bridges see a high amount of vehicular traffic daily. On two of them, annual average daily traffic (AADT) reaches roughly 24,000.

This area of the state not only holds the majority of the state's population, but it serves as the gateway to the rest of Maine. Residents and tourists alike have two high-speed options for reaching areas beyond Greater Portland: I-95 and I-295. It is critical that the infrastructure along I-295 be capable of supporting the heavy traffic flow it experiences daily.

The total cost to replace these four bridges is estimated at \$32.9 million. MaineDOT is seeking assistance for \$26 million, which represents 80% of all future 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 along I-295 are to the residents of Maine as well as the millions of visitors to our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. LePage".

Paul R. LePage
Governor, State of Maine



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TTY USERS CALL 711
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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,

We are pleased to collectively 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. MaineDOT is seeking \$26 million in grant funding that would go to aid four critical bridges in southern Maine along I-295.

The I-295 Bridges Project will fully replace four bridges, each of which has been deemed structurally deficient. Two of these bridges are directly part of the I-295 corridor and see an annual average daily traffic (AADT) count of 24,000 vehicles. The other two are interchange bridges in two communities in northern Cumberland County, both accessing the interstate system.

Maine relies heavily on our tourism industry. This industry sustains 107,000 jobs in Maine and generates nearly \$9 billion in sales. This area of the state serves as the gateway to the rest of Maine. Residents and tourists alike have essentially two high-speed options to access points north of Cumberland County. These are I-95 and I-295. Should one of these corridors have a disruption in traffic flow, such as a closed bridge, the effect on residents, businesses, and all Mainers would be detrimental. Most goods being transported into the state use one of these two interstates, and the same with exports leaving Maine. A closure of one of these four identified bridges would create a detour ranging from 12 to 98 miles, causing devastating effects on Maine's economy.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and respectfully request that you consider awarding the Maine Department of Transportation and the I-295 Bridges Project this grant funding.

Sincerely,



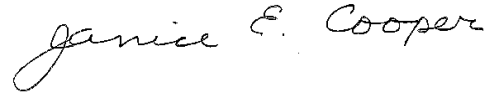
Catherine Breen
State Senator



Sara Gideon
Speaker of the House



Brownie Carson
State Senator



Janice E. Cooper
State Representative



TOWN OF FREEPORT, MAINE

Town Manager's Office
30 Main Street
Freeport, ME 04032

Phone: 207-865-4743 x.118
Email: pjoseph@freeportmaine.com

November 20, 2018

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

Secretary Chao:

It is my understanding that the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is seeking funding from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) through the Competitive Highway Bridge Program, to replace four structurally deficient bridges. Two of these bridges are located here in Freeport, and two are located in our neighboring Town of Yarmouth.

The bridges located in Freeport include the Exit 20 (Desert Road) overpass over I-295 and the Exit 22 (ME-125/ME-136/Mallett Drive) overpass over I-295. Additionally, funding is being sought for the Northbound and Southbound I-295 overpasses over US-1 at Exit 17 in Yarmouth, nearby. These bridges have been prioritized for replacement by MaineDOT, but there is not sufficient funding to complete the replacement of all four bridges in a timely fashion. Funding from the Competitive Highway Bridge program would greatly assist in maintaining these facilities, which are critical to the orderly functioning of the Interstate Highway system in this area of the state.

The Town of Freeport supports this application by the MaineDOT, and respectfully requests careful consideration of said application by your office. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Peter E. Joseph
Town Manager
Town of Freeport, ME

CC: Jim Foster, MaineDOT
Adam Bliss, Freeport Town Engineer



TOWN OF YARMOUTH

200 Main Street · Yarmouth · Maine · 04096

Nathaniel J. Tupper, Town Manager

(207)846-9036 · (207)846-2403

ntupper@yarmouth.me.us

November 19, 2018

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

Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Town of Yarmouth and the tens of thousands of commuters that travel through our community daily, I wholeheartedly support the Maine Department of Transportation's application for funding through the FY 18 Competitive Highway Bridge Program.

The north and south bound I 295 bridges that span across U.S Route 1 is a critical piece of infrastructure that is in desperate need of replacement. These essential structures are responsible for providing safe passage to over 60,000 vehicles per day. Unfortunately, because of the bridges' width and location, traffic congestion is a chronic issue during morning and afternoon commutes. The I 295 bridges at Exit 17 also represents a critical gateway to Yarmouth's residential neighborhoods and commercial corridor. Direct access to I 295 is an extremely marketable quality when attracting new businesses to our community. Likewise, having the ability to access the greater Portland market is often a determining factor for existing businesses that are looking to expand their operations. Any improvements to the existing design would be invaluable.

Locally, the replacement of these two bridges also provides a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with the Maine Department of Transportation to engineer structures that would allow for bicycle and pedestrian access underneath the structures, alongside US Route 1. The Town's complete streets policy calls for the continuation of an existing multimodal pathway which is used by hundreds of residents and visitors daily. Unfortunately, the bridges current design does not allow for safe bike and pedestrian usage, which creates an unwanted terminus. This funding opportunity would allow for continued discussion with our neighboring community to expand the existing pathway to Freeport and offer greater access to essential services along the Route 1 corridor. Yarmouth's recent developments northerly along the Route 1 Corridor are occurring simultaneously with similar commercial growth that is expanding and filling in southerly along the same route from Freeport village. It is well

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www.yarmouth.me.us

understood that our destinies, shared prosperity, and future land use and transportation planning must be considered collaboratively and cooperatively. We have been proud to take this approach along with the Maine DOT and several other neighboring communities that rely so heavily on the I-295 system between Portland and Brunswick- and we see the Department's Bridge Program as a critical regional concern and opportunity.

As Southern Maine continues to grow and attract new populations of residents and business owners, it's imperative to have transportation systems that reflect increased demands. We feel comfortable that through this extremely competitive grant, the Maine Department of Transportation will acknowledge existing engineering restrictions and forecast future need in order to construct bridges that will help to alleviate traffic congestion and unintended vehicular accidents.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nathaniel J. Tupper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nathaniel J. Tupper,
Town Manager



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 four structurally deficient bridges in the Yarmouth/Freepport area of Cumberland County. These bridges are all prioritized for replacement by MaineDOT.

MFPC strongly supports the I-295 Bridges Project for a number of reasons. The forest products industry supports 2,130 jobs (direct and indirect) in Cumberland County, so our workers are traveling daily over the Merrill Road Interchange Bridge on Merrill (Desert) Road over the I-295 in Freepport; the Approach Road Interchange on Routes 125 and 136 over the I-295 in Freepport; the I-295 SB/U.S. 1 in Yarmouth, and the I-295 NB/U.S. 1 in Yarmouth.

The project will help us keep moving wood to mills and sending our products to markets. Access to I-295, which leads to I-95, is essential since we grow wood within a one-day drive of 70 million of people. So it's vital that these bridges safely support heavy trucks as well as passenger vehicles.

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).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick J. Strauch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director