



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

Paul R. LePage

GOVERNOR

October 26, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write in strong support of the Maine Department of Transportation's INFRA grant application and the I-395/Route 9 Connector project that this funding would aid. The project will provide a modern highway link between the Interstate system and the National Highway System in Eastern Maine. The new connector would replace a series of highways that link the two systems, some of which are inadequately built, to accommodate current traffic.

As you know, much of Maine is rural and travel distances are great. Completing this vital link between the interstate system in the Bangor and Brewer area, Route 9, and the National Highway System will reduce the travel time and costs for those traveling from points north and south to areas in Downeast Maine and beyond.

These benefits will be especially realized by the citizens and businesses of Washington County. The Port of Eastport will benefit and international commerce shipments between the United States and Canadian ports in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia will gain efficiency in moving goods to market. Forest products and a new paper mill at the eastern end of Route 9 will be afforded more efficient movement of both raw materials and finished products.

Furthermore, the new connector will produce quicker delivery of aquaculture commodities and fresh Maine lobster to current and growing markets. Our expanded promotion of the "Bold Coast" as one of Maine's premier tourism destinations will continue to generate increased visitation to the region. The State will benefit from a stronger economy in Washington County, historically one of the more economically depressed regions in Maine.

Equally important to these anticipated efficiencies, the connector will greatly increase safety by reducing conflicts between local and regional traffic.

The cost for this project is estimated at \$79.25 million for permitting, design, and construction of the connector. The Maine Department of Transportation is seeking an INFRA grant in the amount of \$33,825,000.



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I thank you for your careful review of this application, and respectfully request that you consider awarding the Maine Department of Transportation and the I-395/ Route 9 Connector project this INFRA funding.

Sincerely,



Paul R. LePage
Governor, State of Maine