

## **NO STIMULUS GRANT FOR MEMORIAL BRIDGE**

CONCORD, NH/AUGUSTA, ME - The Maine and New Hampshire Departments of Transportation have announced that their joint application for \$70 million in federal TIGER Discretionary Grant funding to rehabilitate the aging Memorial Bridge between Portsmouth and Kittery was not successful. Grants were announced today by the US Department of Transportation.

New Hampshire DOT Commissioner George Campbell and MaineDOT Commissioner David Cole are both disappointed that the grant application was not successful. "Many people in both New Hampshire and Maine worked tirelessly in support of this grant, and despite the outcome, we thank them for their efforts," said Campbell. Cole agreed, adding, "This was a highly competitive process, with \$56.5 billion of grant applications vying for \$1.5 billion of funds. Everyone did the best they could to make the case for this funding, but we can now move forward and complete the Study, which will help us make the best long-term decision for the region."

The Memorial Bridge and the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge are the focus of the *Maine-NH Connections Study*, which is seeking to determine the best solution relative to rehabilitating or replacing the Memorial and Sarah Long Bridges. The failure to receive TIGER Grant funding will not influence the outcome or the progress of the study, says Gerry Audibert, MaineDOT study manager. "To date, the study indicates that some form of crossing at the location of the Memorial Bridge is needed, and we will continue our analysis and have a final recommendation by June." Bob Landry, NHDOT project manager, added, "We have learned a lot about the traffic needs in this area, both now and in the future. By the end of June, we will announce a preferred alternative for both the Memorial and the Sarah Mildred Long Bridges will be identified that will fulfill future multimodal requirements and the needs of the communities as we have heard them during the study process."

Both Landry and Audibert agreed that finding the dollars to fund the study's recommendation will be more difficult without the federal grant dollars. However, MaineDOT and NHDOT are actively exploring alternative means to fund the critical repairs needed for both the Memorial and Sarah Long Bridges. Both Maine and New Hampshire are committed to supporting the study outcomes and will continue to work together toward a solution.

The next public meeting for the Maine-NH Connections Study will take place on February 25, 2010 from 6-8 pm at the Portsmouth Library. An Open House will take place for those who want to view maps and ask questions starting at 5:30 pm.