

**Letters of Support**  
**Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT 2019 BUILD Grant Application**

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## United States Senate

July 15, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write in support of the application from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant from the United States Department of Transportation for the Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project.

Strengthening and modernizing our transportation infrastructure is critical to the success of our people and businesses. The Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges were constructed in the 1920s and connect Hinsdale, New Hampshire to Brattleboro, Vermont over the Connecticut River, and are critical for the local, regional, national, and international movement of freight and people. NH Route 119 connects Cheshire County and the Monadnock Region to Interstate 91 in Vermont, which then connects the region to the Canadian trade market as well as larger New England ports to the south.

Due to their age and the harsh northern climate, the steel truss bridges have deteriorated and require significant rehabilitation or replacement. This project proposes a new bridge located downstream of the existing bridges with two lanes, two shoulders, and a sidewalk for pedestrian passage, along with vertical clearance for freight movement.

With the support of this grant, the new bridge would serve the citizens of Hinsdale, Winchester, and Westmoreland, New Hampshire, many of whom commute to Vermont for employment. Businesses in the area would also rely on the new bridge to help facilitate the delivery of goods and services throughout the area. Additionally, the nearest medical facility serves the entire region.

This grant would be a significant investment for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and would be critical to the quality of life and economic vitality of the region. I urge you to look favorably upon their application. Please do not hesitate to contact Dorothy Parsons in my office at (603) 622-2204 if we can be of further assistance. Thank you for your consideration.

With every good wish,



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

CC: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT  
Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans

ANN McLANE KUSTER  
SECOND DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
[WWW.KUSTER.HOUSE.GOV](http://WWW.KUSTER.HOUSE.GOV)

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY  
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July 8, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am proud to support the 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant (BUILD 2019) Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$20 million submitted jointly by Vermont Agency of Transportation and New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the “Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project”. These funds will address the needs of this rural region of the state by bypassing two deteriorated and functionally-obsolete bridges with a new bridge to the south of their current location. These critical “interstate” bridges carry NH Route 119 over the Connecticut River and connect the communities of Hinsdale, New Hampshire and Brattleboro, Vermont, as well as the surrounding regions.

Built in 1920, the nearly 100-year old existing Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are experiencing advanced, widespread deterioration of the trusses, floor beams, stringers, and substructure systems. Due to their age and the heavy use of de-icing agents in the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the point that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required for continued vehicular and truck travel on the highway.

The new proposed bridge is critical for the movement of people and goods locally, regionally and internationally. NH Route 119 connects Cheshire County and the Monadnock Region in New Hampshire to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91 in Vermont, which then connects the entire region to the Canadian trade market to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south.

This proposed new bridge is critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont citizens in the region, including nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale, NH who commute to Vermont for employment. Businesses in the area rely on these bridges daily to facilitate delivery of goods and services throughout the area.

The project is consistent with state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTrans, and appears in both New Hampshire's approved Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Vermont's State Transportation Improvement Program.

I am pleased to fully support the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's application for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Discretionary Grant. This proposal would provide critical assistance to the local economy and infrastructure and ensure the continued economic viability of the region. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or status updates, you may reach out to Tom Giancola from my office at [Tom.Giancola@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tom.Giancola@mail.house.gov) or (603) 595-2006.

Sincerely,



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

July 3, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

We write to express our support for the joint grant application submitted by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to the BUILD program to replace the Brattleboro-Hinsdale Bridges. We are pleased to bring this proposal to your attention.

Brattleboro, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire are neighboring communities separated by a state border under the Connecticut River. The 1920's era truss bridges connecting the two towns were declared functionally obsolete in the late 1980's, failing to meet modern design and weight standards. A proposed new bridge is vital to the continued community and economic development of these two towns.

With this grant, the transportation agencies will replace the two bridges with a single steel girder bridge, ensuring a safe and reliable connection between these communities for decades to come. The new proposed bridge includes important safety updates such as a turning lane, traffic signals, and a sidewalk for pedestrian traffic. Beyond these safety upgrades, the bridge will ensure easier connections for freight shipments to Interstate 91, aiding the economic development of both communities.

Thank you for giving this application the serious consideration it deserves. If we can provide further evidence of our support for this grant proposal, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator



PETER WELCH  
United States Congressman



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU**  
Governor

July 10, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of Infrastructure Finance and Innovation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I strongly support the 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant (BUILD 2019) Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$20 million submitted jointly by Vermont Agency of Transportation and New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the "*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*". The project addresses the needs of this rural region of the state by bypassing two deteriorated and functionally-obsolete bridges with a new bridge just south (downstream) of their current location. These critical "interstate" bridges carry NH Route 119 over the Connecticut River and connect the communities of Hinsdale, New Hampshire and Brattleboro, Vermont, as well as the surrounding regions.

Built in 1920, the nearly 100-year old existing Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are experiencing advanced, widespread deterioration of the trusses, floorbeams, stringers, and substructure systems. Due to their age and the heavy use of de-icing agents in the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the point that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required for continued vehicular and truck travel on the highway. A new bridge will be built to convey vehicles and trucks over the river. The two bypassed historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated once construction of the new bridge is completed, preserving two historic resources and providing recreational opportunities for both communities to enjoy the Connecticut River and the island located between these structures.

This new proposed bridge is a critical facility for the movement of people and goods locally, regionally and internationally. NH Route 119 connects Cheshire County and the Monadnock Region in New Hampshire to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91 in Vermont, which then connects the entire region to the Canadian trade market to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south. If the existing bridges are down-posted or closed, traffic would be detoured an additional 9 miles to the north through NH Route 9 in Chesterfield to Vermont Route 5 or an additional 19 miles to the south through Massachusetts on NH Route 10 to Vermont Route 5. Likewise, the nearest medical facility (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro) serves the entire region. Should the bridges be down-posted or closed, the next nearest medical facility is the Cheshire Medical Center 20 miles to the northeast, 12 miles further.

This proposed new bridge is critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont citizens in the region, including nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale, NH who commute to Vermont for employment. Businesses in the area rely on these bridges daily to facilitate delivery of goods and services throughout the area.

The project is consistent with state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTrans, and appears in both the New Hampshire's approved Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Vermont's State Transportation Improvement Program.

The proposed application represents a significant investment for the regional transportation needs that would maintain and enhance the quality of life for area residents, promote economic development, and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu  
Governor

CC: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT  
Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans

PHILIP B. SCOTT  
Governor



State of Vermont  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 25, 2019

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

Subject: Hinsdale, NH-Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Hinsdale, NH-Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project that is competing for \$20 million in Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) funding.

A joint application by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, this project addresses the need to replace a functionally-obsolete two-deck bridge with a new bridge just south of the current location. This critical bridge crosses the Connecticut River and connects the communities and regional economic centers of Brattleboro, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire.

Built in 1926, the existing bridge is in deteriorated condition. Due to its age and the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the extent that replacement is required. The replacement bridge will remedy this condition and the existing bridge will remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

The bridge is a critical facility for the movement of people and goods nationally and internationally. It connects New England economies via the Interstate 91 International Trade Corridor to Canadian trade markets to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south. Any down-posting or closing of the bridge will require significant detours as far as 19 miles way.

This bridge is also critically important to the connectivity, economy, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont, which support economic development. Businesses in the area utilize this bridge daily to facilitate delivery of goods and services throughout the region, and nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale, New Hampshire commute to Vermont for employment.

I believe the Hinsdale, NH-Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project is an ideal candidate for BUILD funding. I hope you share my enthusiasm for this application, and I would be happy to discuss its merits with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott", written over a horizontal line.

Philip B. Scott  
Governor

**State of Vermont**  
**Office of the Secretary**  
219 North Main Street, Suite 101  
Barre, VT 05641  
[vtrans.vermont.gov](http://vtrans.vermont.gov)

[phone] 802-476-2690  
[fax] 802-479-2210  
[ttd] 802-253-0191

*Agency of Transportation*

June 20, 2019

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

Subject: Hinsdale, NH-Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Hinsdale, NH-Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project that is competing for \$20 million in Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) funding.

A joint application by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, this project addresses the need to replace a functionally obsolete two-deck bridge with a new bridge just south of the current location. This critical bridge crosses the Connecticut River and connects the communities and regional economic centers of Brattleboro, VT and Hinsdale, NH.

Built in 1926, the bridge is in deteriorated condition. Due to its age and the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the extent that replacement is required. The replacement bridge will remedy this condition and the existing bridge will remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

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This bridge is also critically important to the connectivity, economy, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont, which support economic development. Businesses in the area utilize this bridge daily to facilitate delivery of goods and services throughout the region, and nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale commute to Vermont for employment.

I believe the Hinsdale, NH-Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project would be an ideal candidate for BUILD funding. I hope you share my enthusiasm for this application, and I would be happy to discuss its merits with you.

Sincerely,



Joe Flynn  
Secretary of Transportation





# *Town of Hinsdale*

HINSDALE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

03451

OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

July 1, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I strongly support the 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant (BUILD 2019) Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$20 million submitted jointly by Vermont Agency of Transportation and New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the "*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*". The project addresses the needs of this rural region of the state by bypassing two deteriorated and functionally-obsolete bridges with a new bridge just south (downstream) of their current location. These critical "interstate" bridges carry NH Route 119 over the Connecticut River and connect the communities of Hinsdale, New Hampshire and Brattleboro, Vermont, as well as the surrounding regions.

Built in 1920, the nearly 100-year old existing Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are experiencing advanced, widespread deterioration of the trusses, floorbeams, stringers, and substructure systems. Due to their age and the heavy use of de-icing agents in the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the point that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required for continued vehicular and truck travel on the highway. A new bridge will be built to convey vehicles and trucks over the river. The two bypassed historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated once construction of the new bridge is completed, preserving two historic resources and providing recreational opportunities for both communities to enjoy the Connecticut River and the island located between these structures.

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This proposed new bridge is critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont citizens in the region, including nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale, NH who commute to Vermont for employment. Businesses in the area rely on these bridges daily to facilitate delivery of goods and services throughout the area.

The project is consistent with state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTrans, and appears in both the New Hampshire's approved Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Vermont's State Transportation Improvement Program.

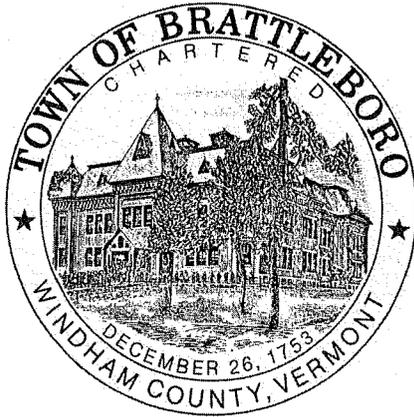
The proposed application represents a significant investment for the regional transportation needs that would maintain and enhance the quality of life for area residents, promote economic development, and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably.

Sincerely,



Mike Darey  
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

CC: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT  
Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans



## TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO

Town Manager's Office  
230 Main Street, Suite 208  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
Phone (802) 251-8151  
FAX (802) 257-2322  
[www.brattleboro.org](http://www.brattleboro.org)

July 10, 2019

Secretary Elaine L. Cho  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Cho,

I am writing to express enthusiastic support from the Town of Brattleboro for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2019) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal submitted by our partner, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, for the "*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project.*"

I am confident that you will receive numerous letters of support for this project that describe the urgent need for funding, the importance of the subject infrastructure to the economic and cultural vitality of the region, and how this investment will serve to sustain the unique quality of life found only in this small corner of the State of Vermont. All of this is true, but I would like to take the opportunity to emphasize another point. This project comes at a rare moment where existing transportation assets are already the beneficiary of significant outside investment, which offers the US Department of Transportation the opportunity to generate more value with this investment.

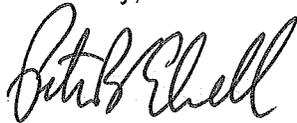
Brattleboro's success in the region has long been attributed to its location. We are a regional transportation hub with proximity to all major northeast markets, Boston, New York, and Montreal. We sit on the banks for the Connecticut River, adjacent to the states of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Our town is situated at the crossroads of one of the region's few east-west corridors and occupies the first three exits on the Interstate Highway that enters Vermont from the south. Footpaths lead for miles in several directions, making this area a natural choice for recreation enthusiasts. It is also the case that when travelers enter our state by rail, their first stop is right here in Brattleboro.

The intersection of all these key transportation assets occurs in this same location. The new bridge will support vital interstate economic interests, while the repairs to the antiquated bridges will link outdoor recreation on the river with the trail system, which are themselves immediately adjacent to Brattleboro's Union Station, and a short walk to downtown, with its parking garage and bus terminal, the Brattleboro Transportation Center.

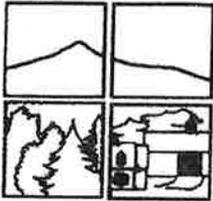
Separate and apart from this bridge project, the Town of Brattleboro and Amtrak are working together to make significant improvements to Brattleboro's Union Station. The objective of Amtrak is a station that achieves full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Amtrak is currently planning a raised platform, along with other ADA upgrades that will include sidewalks, safety fencing and new lighting.

When all this work is complete, each party will benefit from the compounding value of multiple simultaneous investments. We find this to be an exciting time, one with real potential to capitalize on this confluence of transportation assets with investment coming from many directions. Please give serious consideration to the application from New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter B. Elwell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter B. Elwell  
Town Manager



## Southwest Region Planning Commission

37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH 03431

603-357-0557 Voice

603-357-7440 Fax

July 10, 2019

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

Re: New Hampshire DOT BUILD Grant Application for Hinsdale, NH - Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), I am writing in support of the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants proposal in the amount of \$20 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) for the "*Hinsdale, NH - Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project.*"

The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement has been at the top of SWRPC's list of priority transportation infrastructure projects for 30 years. The existing bridges are functionally obsolete and exhibit structural deterioration from nearly a full century of use in the harsh northern New England climate. The current configuration also involves an at-grade railroad crossing that creates on-going disruptions in accessibility and emergency response capabilities. This critical link over the Connecticut River connects two economically challenged communities, two regions and two states in everyday activities including employment, commerce, public safety, and access to service. Access to I-91, located immediately west of the river in Vermont, serves as a vital economic connection to the municipalities of Southwest New Hampshire. The bridge replacement project also presents an opportunity to enhance high speed broadband services in communities of both States.

The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement project is addressed either directly or indirectly in several formal planning documents adopted and maintained by SWRPC as well as recent and on-going activities in which the agency is directly involved. Some of these are referenced and summarized as follows:

**Monadnock Region Future** - adopted in 2015 and serving as the regional plan for Southwest, NH.

Findings (p. 43):

- *High performing and reliable infrastructure is a vital component of a robust regional economy. In Southwest NH, our infrastructure needs are great; however, we are severely challenged in our ability to repair, maintain, and upgrade these systems and structures.*
- *Mobility is one of the most fundamental and important characteristics of economic activity . . . Much of (our) infrastructure is aging and needs to be repaired or replaced.*

Strategy (p. 48):

- *Identify and advocate for community transportation needs and pursue funding solutions which may include federal funding programs.*

**Southwest Connects: Southwest Region Transportation Plan** - updated in 2015.

- Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement project is featured in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (p. 9).
- *Chesterfield and Hinsdale's proximity to I-91 and the New England Central Railroad, both of which are transportation-related economic engines, perhaps provides the best position in the Southwest Region for economic growth opportunities. Some new employers have been attracted to the communities' location at the trisection of New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont including Walmart and Fed Ex (pp. 57-8).*
- Challenges (p. 61):
  - *1920s-era Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges require NH and VT coordination and massive investment leaving project on hold for decades.*
  - *Closure of either existing bridge would require detour of 23 miles to the north or 30 miles to the south.*

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southwest NH** - adopted in 2005 in conjunction with the U.S. Economic Development Administration; most recently updated in 2015.

- *Goal: Prepare for future development.*
  - *Objective: Support a quality transportation system, both locally and regionally, to provide capacity for desired economic development.*
    - *Task: In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, improve road conditions and access management to support safe and efficient movement of people and goods.*
- The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement is specifically identified as a Priority Project within the CEDS (p. 122).

**Southwest New Hampshire Broadband Plan** - adopted in 2015 as part of the NH Broadband Mapping and Planning Program (NHBMPP) funded under a grant through the National Telecommunication and Information Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

- *Goal: Provide and maintain reliable, high-capacity broadband infrastructure and technology in all areas of the Region over time.*
  - *Objective: Regularly upgrade infrastructure to support the capabilities of available technology and services.*
    - *Strategy: Encourage policies that promote the installation of broadband conduit when construction occurs in roadway rights of way.*
    - *Strategy: Promote the inclusion of broadband infrastructure development and maintenance in public works projects (pp. 47-48).*

## **Vermont Yankee Closure Report**

In 2015, the Vermont Yankee nuclear facility located in nearby Vernon, VT ceased power generating operations and began closure activities resulting in the loss of approximately 600 high-paying jobs for residents in adjacent areas of New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont. These jobs, plus nearly 800 largely service-sector jobs lost as a result of secondary and induced economic impacts, result in approximately \$100 million in lost wages annually in the Tri-State area. The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement project will provide a boost in economic activity helping to mitigate the impact of these lost wages.

### **Tri-State Partnership**

SWRPC has entered into a memorandum of understanding as a commitment to collaboration with its counterparts including Windham Regional Commission (VT) and Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (MA). This Tri-State Partnership endeavors to develop joint strategies to effectively address shared socioeconomic challenges and opportunities. One initiative of note is an on-going assessment of cross-border mobility among employment and service centers in the tri-state region in which the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge reconstruction is the principal component.

Please find additional statistics and descriptive information pertinent to the bridge replacement project in the addendum attached to this letter.

This proposed new bridge is critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality and quality of life for New Hampshire and Vermont citizens that live in the area. Nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale, NH commute to Vermont for employment. This crossing is critical to the quality of life, economic well-being, and public safety of the region. The bridge replacement project is consistent with the state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTrans, and appears in both state's approved transportation improvement programs.

I am pleased to express support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. If you have questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy  
Executive Director

cc: Victoria Sheehan, Commissioner, NHDOT  
Joseph Flynn, Secretary, VTrans

**NHDOT BUILD Application for Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Replacement Project  
Addendum to SWRPC Letter of Support dated July 8, 2019**

**Commuting (US Census, 2015):**

- 47.6% of Hinsdale workers are likely to use the bridge to get to work in Vermont or the Upper Valley in NH (Lebanon and Hanover).
- 8.6% of Brattleboro workers are likely to use the bridge to get to work in these southwest NH towns (Hinsdale, Winchester, Fitzwilliam, Rindge).

**Population Loss (US Census, 2017):**

- Hinsdale's population is estimated to have decreased by 4% between 2010 and 2017.

**Economic data (NH Department of Employment Security, 2017):**

- In the last available 10-year period (2008-2017) Hinsdale's annual average labor force has decreased 17% and its number of employed have decreased 16%.

**Economic data (Community Development Financial Institutions):**

- Hinsdale is designated as a federal New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) area. NMTC eligible census tracts include those that have either: 1) Median Family Income at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) in the period of 2011-2015, or 2) Poverty Rate of 20% or greater in the period of 2011-2015.
- Hinsdale is a Severe Distress and Non-Metropolitan area. Meeting the NMTC Severe Distress or Non-Metropolitan criteria is based on whether or not a given Census tract meets basic NMTC eligibility, plus one of the following factors: having a median family income at or below 60% of AMI in the period of 2006-2010; having a poverty rate at or above 30% in the period of 2011-2015; having an unemployment rate of at least 1.5 times the national unemployment rate in the period of 2006-2010; or being in a county that is not part of a metropolitan statistical area.
- Hinsdale qualifies for NMTC's because it is 67.3% of the area median family income.

**Economic data (ACS 2015 5 Year Estimates):**

- Median HH income: Hinsdale, \$57,340; Cheshire County \$60,148; NH, \$71,305; US, \$57,652
- Median Family income: Hinsdale, \$61,972; Cheshire County \$76,112; NH, \$86,949; US, \$70,850

**Hinsdale's Planning Efforts:**

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Report (2016) via EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program:
  - *Frequent bottlenecks on the narrow truss bridge over the Connecticut River hinders access to the nearby interstate and to the economic hub of Brattleboro, particularly for trucks, which are nearly as wide as the bridge, thus requiring other vehicles to stop and wait while they cross. A new bridge suitable for heavy-duty vehicle traffic is slated for construction in a few years, at which point the current bridge will be closed to vehicles but open for pedestrians and bicyclists. Hinsdale leaders are looking forward to the economic opportunities that will be generated by the new bridge configuration. Current*

*manufacturers will have easier access to ship goods and materials, as will potential new businesses. Meanwhile, the old bridge is slated to be redesigned and improved for hikers and cyclists, which could increase the town's attractiveness to people touring the region's numerous parks and scenic roadways. The bridge's location next to the Brattleboro Amtrak station is a bonus, as cyclists can bring bikes on the Vermonter train that stops there. (p. 4)*

- *When the (existing) truss bridges are closed to vehicle traffic, bicycle tourists on the Amtrak Vermonter (Washington, D.C., to St. Albans, VT) could ride from the Brattleboro station to the Connecticut River bikeway in downtown Hinsdale. (p. 5)*
- *Goal 3: Attract tourists, foster businesses, and build amenities for local residents that capitalize on the region's abundant rivers and forests. (p. 16)*
  - *Strategy: Develop a plan for Island Park and old bridges. Want to be proactive about planning for new bridge and making sure the island park is actively used and the old bridges become attractive bicycle pedestrian paths.*
- National Parks 3 Year Technical Assistance Program via Rivers Trails Conservation Assistance Program:
  - National Parks are helping Hinsdale promote its rail trails (Fort Hill Branch) and connectivity with old bridges to Hinsdale.
- Talking with Brattleboro about connectivity:
  - Brattleboro working to secure bike/ped easements on waterfront and connectivity to Hinsdale-Brattleboro bridges as well as railroad trestle bridge further south.



July 9, 2019

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

Re: New Hampshire DOT BUILD Grant Application for Hinsdale, NH - Brattleboro, VT Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Windham Regional Commission (WRC), I am pleased to provide this letter for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2018) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$20 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the "Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project".

The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement has been at or near the top of WRC's list of priority transportation infrastructure projects for 30 years. The existing bridges are functionally obsolete and exhibit structural deterioration from over 90 years of use in the often harsh northern New England climate. The current configuration also involves an at-grade railroad crossing that creates on-going disruptions in accessibility and emergency response capabilities as traffic backs up into downtown Brattleboro, including Main Street which is also U.S. Route 5. This critical link over the Connecticut River connects two communities, two regions, and two states in everyday activities including employment, commerce, public safety, and access to services. The WRC is working closely with the Town of Brattleboro on master planning trail connections and networks in the area. These bridges, new and existing, offer critical links to these networks.

The WRC has entered into a memorandum of understanding as a commitment to collaboration with its counterparts including Southwest Regional Planning Commission (NH) and Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (MA). This Tri-State Partnership endeavors to develop joint strategies in effectively addressing shared socioeconomic challenges and opportunities. One initiative of note is an on-going assessment of cross-border mobility among employment and

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Website [www.windhamregional.org](http://www.windhamregional.org)

service centers in the tri-state region in which the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge reconstruction is a key element.

This proposed new bridge is critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for New Hampshire and Vermont citizens that live in the area. The project is consistent with the state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTTrans, and appears in both state's approved transportation improvement programs.

The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement project supports the policies of the Windham Regional Plan, adopted September 30, 2014 both directly through the construction of the new bridge and rehabilitation of the old bridges and by fostering connectivity between development projects in the greater project area.

### **Transportation Policies**

- *Minimize functional conflicts.*
- *Preserve and create Right-of-Ways for future transportation linkages between communities, neighborhood services, and other destinations.*
- *Design culverts and bridges to carry a 50-year flood event without damage.*
- *Promote high quality design for all transportation projects, including roads, bridges, train stations, bus stops, etc.*
- *Review and accommodate for non-motorized transportation, such as bicycle lanes, wider shoulders and sidewalks in roadway and bridge projects.*
- *Preserve and encourage creation of Rights of Way for future linkages between communities, neighborhoods services and other destinations.*
- *Implement an integrated, multi-modal transportation system in the urban centers; providing connections between rail, air, bus, car, bike, and pedestrian.*
- *Include transit orientated development in any proposed project.*

### **Land Use Policies**

- *Preserve the historic and architectural character of the region. Support the reuse and repurposing of viable existing structures to retain historic development patterns, densities, and character in the region, especially within regional centers, villages, and hamlets.*

### **Natural Resources Policies**

- *Ensure that effective site rehabilitation plans are provided and implemented for new development projects*

### **Communications Policies**

- *Promote universal access to broadband telecommunications and information services that are competitive in availability and cost.*

### **Historic Preservation Policies**

- *Support rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of significant historic sites and structures.*

I am pleased to provide this letter. Please consider awarding full funding for this project as it will support and improve vital connections between two communities, two regions, and two states. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. If you have questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Campany". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Chris Campany  
Executive Director

cc: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT  
Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans  
Sue Fillion, Town of Brattleboro Commissioner to the WRC  
Karen Astley, WRC Transportation Interim Committee Chair

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write in support of the 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2019) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal submitted jointly by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the “*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project.*” This project will address the needs of rural portions of these two states by bypassing two functionally-obsolete bridges with a new bridge just south of their current location over the Connecticut River.

After almost 100-years of use in the harsh northern climate, the vital Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are in deteriorated condition, progressing to the point that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required. With funding from the BUILD Program, a new bridge will be built to allow for the continuation of vital economic development and connectivity.

This crossing is critical for the movement of goods and people locally, regionally and internationally. It carries the vital highway NH Route 119, which connects Cheshire County and the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91 in Vermont, which then connects the region to the Canadian trade market to the north and the larger New England ports to the south. Without these bridges, the closest crossing requires a 16.9-mile detour to the north through Chesterfield or a 19-mile detour to the south through Massachusetts.

The current bridges are vitally important to the economy and quality of life for New Hampshire and Vermont residents. They connect the communities of Hinsdale, New Hampshire and Brattleboro, Vermont, allow the many residents of Hinsdale who commute to Vermont for employment a convenient passage over the border and provide businesses in the area with a route to make easy deliveries of goods and services to the region. The bridges are also critical for residents and medical professionals in the area to have quick access to the nearest medical facility in Brattleboro, which serves the region.

Once construction of the new bridge is complete, the two bypassed historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated, preserving two historic resources and providing recreational opportunities for both communities to enjoy the Connecticut River and the island located between these structures.

The project is consistent with state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTTrans and appears in both the New Hampshire’s approved Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Vermont’s State Transportation Improvement Program. It represents a significant investment for the region that would maintain and enhance the quality of life for the area residents and promote economic development. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jon Jarvis on my staff at (603) 647-7500.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

CC: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT, Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTTrans

CHRIS PAPPAS

FIRST DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND INVESTIGATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

VICE CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD  
AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

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AND THE ENVIRONMENT



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House of Representatives

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August 19, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to you in support of the application for the 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant requested jointly from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Vermont Transportation Agency. This grant would be used directly for the "*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project.*" I ask that you give this application full and fair consideration.

According to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Vermont Transportation Agency, the nearly 100-year-old Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana bridges are subject to widespread deterioration to the point where replacement or extreme rehabilitation is necessary for the continuance of use. The BUILD grant will be used to construct a new bridge connecting the communities of Hinsdale, NH and Brattleboro, VT as well as their surrounding regions.

New Hampshire's approved Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Vermont's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program both include this new proposed bridge demonstrating the critical nature of the project to the region. In addition to the nearly 50% of residents of Hinsdale, NH who commute to Vermont for employment, there are many area businesses that rely on this roadway to deliver goods and services throughout the region.

This project represents critical investment that would improve regional transportation needs, help drive the local economy, and enhance the quality of life for residents in the region.

I thank you again for your full and fair consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Pappas".

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress