



*Victoria F. Sheehan*  
*Commissioner*

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



*William Cass, P.E.*  
*Assistant Commissioner*

July 18, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

Please find enclosed an application for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grant program. It is being submitted by the State of New Hampshire for the "*Hinsdale, NH — Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*" and requests \$25 million of Federal funds under the FY 2018 BUILD discretionary grant program. This project will address safety and congestion concerns relative to two functionally-obsolete and structurally deficient bridges and an at-grade railroad crossing, as well as improve the movement of freight, enhance local multimodal transportation needs, and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region. We are also pleased to note that our project includes the infrastructure for broadband expansion between Hinsdale, New Hampshire and Brattleboro, Vermont which is considered critical to the economic competitiveness of rural southwestern New Hampshire.

This project includes the construction of a new multi-span bridge to carry NH Route 119 over the Connecticut River and bypass the existing two structurally deficient truss bridges, the Anna Hunt Marsh and the Charles Dana bridges, that today carry NH Route 119 over the river. The existing bridges were built in the 1920s with substantial rehabilitation completed in 1988 and again as recently as 2003. The bridges require constant maintenance as a result of their construction type and age. Due to the historic nature of the existing bridges and extensive project outreach and resource agency consultation process, the project includes "minimally" rehabilitating the existing structures for pedestrian, bicycle and alternative transportation use.

The existing bridges are in a deteriorated condition and will require increasing and costly maintenance in the upcoming years to continue to serve as the primary east-west route in the region. Furthermore, due to not only the limited vertical clearance of the portals but also the narrowness of the bridges, vehicle strikes from trucks and oversized vehicles are common and dangerous, severely disrupting traffic flow, negatively effecting safety and requiring frequent inspections and repairs. The project will completely address the functional obsolescence of the existing structures. The project also addresses the important movement of people and goods in this rural region of the state, which enhances employment opportunities and maintains connectivity to local, regional, national and international freight systems from the southern portions of New Hampshire and Vermont to the Interstate 91 corridor that connects New England with the Canadian trade markets and which is part of the USDOT Multimodal Freight Network Map.

These bridges are also crucial to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont. Businesses in the area utilize these bridges daily to deliver goods and services

throughout the region. Nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale commute to Vermont for employment, making this crossing crucial to the quality of life and economic well-being of the region. These bridges serve as a link to the downtown area of Brattleboro for retail, tourism, and service industries. This project will address the regional transportation needs, and will enhance the economic well-being of these two communities and the region.

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

You can find letters of support for the project, grant attachments, and additional information on the bridge inspections and public involvement to date on our webpage at <https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/hinsdalebrattleboro12210/index.htm>.

It is important to note that New Hampshire receives the lowest total annual federal apportionment of all the states for transportation, therefore investing in larger projects such as this one limits the Department's ability to address smaller structurally-deficient bridge projects across the State. This project will help maintain and enhance the quality of life for the area residents and promote economic development, making it extremely important to the State. The Department is also committing a sizeable portion of non-federal funds to the project to leverage the requested BUILD grant for this rural project. The BUILD grant would be a significant boost towards accomplishing this much needed project, as it would reduce the need for bonding and consequently lower the overall project cost for the State.

New Hampshire is grateful for the opportunity to submit this application and appreciates the consideration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. We look forward to hearing from you upon completion of the review process.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victoria F. Sheehan".

Victoria F. Sheehan  
Commissioner  
NH Department of Transportation

Cc: Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans

