

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

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Letters can be found on the Grant web page located at
<https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/hinsdalebrattleboro12210/index.htm>

United States Senate

July 19, 2018

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. 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 federal Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant for the NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project. The project addresses the needs of this rural portion of the state by bypassing two functionally obsolete bridges with a new bridge just 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.

Built in 1926, the existing bridges – the Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges – are experiencing advanced, widespread deterioration of the truss, 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 bypass bridge will remedy this status and the existing historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated and remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

The proposed bridge is a critical facility for the movement of people and goods locally, regionally, and internationally – which will help drive economic growth and create jobs. New Hampshire 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 nine miles to the north through New Hampshire Route 9 in Chesterfield or an additional 19 miles to the south through Massachusetts on New Hampshire Route 10.

Likewise, a bridge closure would impact the availability of medical services for the residents. The nearest medical facility (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro) serves the entire region, while the next nearest medical facility is the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene – approximately 20 miles to the northeast.

This proposed bridge is also critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont citizens that live in the region. Businesses in the area utilize these bridges daily to facilitate delivery of goods and services throughout the region, and nearly 50 percent of the residents of Hinsdale commute to Vermont for employment. This project will address regional transportation needs and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region.

The Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project is consistent with the state of good repair plans for both the NHDOT and Vermont Agency of Transportation, and it appears in both the New Hampshire's approved Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Vermont's State Transportation Improvement Program.

This grant funding will help support a significant investment in the region that would maintain and enhance quality of life, strengthen public safety and access to health care services, and promote economic development. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably. 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

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 18, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I strongly support the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2018) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$25 million submitted by 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 this rural portion of the state by bypassing two functionally-obsolete bridges with a new bridge just 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. Built in 1926, the Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are in deteriorated condition. Due to their age and the harsh northern climate, the bridges have deteriorated to the point that significant rehabilitation or replacement is needed. A new bypass bridge will remedy this issue while the existing historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated and remain open and be maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

This crossing is critical to the movement of people and goods locally, regionally and internationally. NH Route 119 connects Cheshire County and the Monadnock Region to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91, which then connects the region to the Canadian trade market to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south. Without this bridge, the closest crossing requires a 16.9-mile detour to the north through Chesterfield or a 19-mile detour to the south through Massachusetts.

This bridge is also vitally 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. The crossing is also critical to the nearly 50% of Hinsdale residents who commute to Vermont for employment. A new bridge will address regional transportation concerns and needs while ensuring the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region.

The project is consistent with the state of good repair plans for both NHDOT and VTTrans, and appears in 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 of the area residents and promote economic development. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

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

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2018

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 11, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing in support of the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2018) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal (DUNS# 80-859-1697) in the amount of \$25 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the "*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*". The project addresses the needs of the two functionally-obsolete bridges by bypassing them with a new bridge just south of the 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.

Built in 1926, the Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are in deteriorated condition. Due to their age and the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the extent that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required. The bypass bridge will remedy this status and the existing historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated and remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

The 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 to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91 which then connects the region to the Canadian trade market to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south. If the bridge is down-posted or closed, traffic may be detoured an additional 9 miles to the north through NH Route 9 in Chesterfield or an additional 19 miles to the south through Massachusetts on NH Route 10.

Likewise, a bridge closure would impact the availability of medical services for the residents. The nearest medical facility (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro) serves the entire region. The next nearest medical facility is the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene which is approximately 20 miles to the northeast, 12 miles and 15 minutes further.

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. Nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale commute to Vermont for employment, therefore, the crossing is critical to the quality of life and economic vitality of the region. This project will address regional transportation needs, and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region.

The project is consistent with the 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.

This is a significant investment for the region that would maintain and enhance the quality of life of the area residents and promote economic development. Thank you for your consideration of this important project and I look forward to you as the grant process moves forward.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor

PHILIP B. SCOTT
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 17, 2018

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

RE: Hinsdale, New Hampshire - Brattleboro, Vermont Bridge Replacement Project BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Hinsdale, New Hampshire - Brattleboro, Vermont Bridge Replacement Project that is competing for \$25 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 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 existing bridge will remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

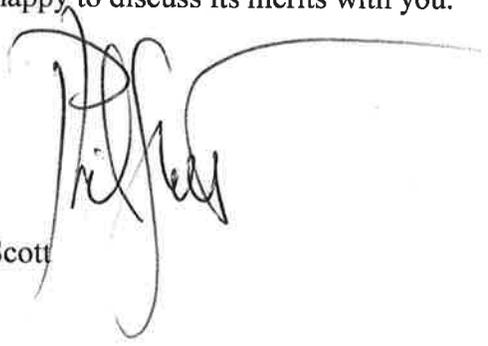
Replacement of the bridge is critical to maintain the movement of people and goods nationally and internationally. It will maintain the connection between New England economies via the Interstate 91 International Trade Corridor to Canadian trade markets to the north as well as larger New England ports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

This bridge is also critically important to the connectivity, economy, and quality of life for both New Hampshire and Vermont, and supports local 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.

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
July 17, 2018
Page Two

I believe the Hinsdale, New Hampshire - Brattleboro, Vermont 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', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp

State of Vermont
Office of the Secretary
One National Life Drive
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001
vtrans.vermont.gov

[phone] 802-828-2657
[fax] 802-828-3522
[ttd] 802-253-0191

Agency of Transportation

July 19, 2018

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 \$25 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 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.

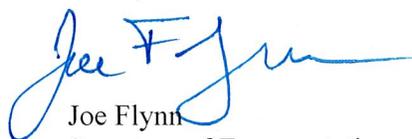
Built in 1926, the bridge is in deteriorated condition. Due to its age and the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the extent that replacement is required. The replacement bridge will remedy this condition and the existing bridge will remain open and maintained for pedestrian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

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 much 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 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 17, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I strongly support the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2018) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$25 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the "*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*". The project addresses the needs of the two functionally-obsolete bridges by bypassing them with a new bridge just south of the 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.

Built in 1926, the Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are in deteriorated condition. Due to their age and the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the extent that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required. The bypass bridge will remedy this status and the existing historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated and remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

The 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 to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91 which then connects the region to the Canadian trade market to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south. If the bridge is down-posted or closed, traffic may be detoured an additional 9 miles to the north through NH Route 9 in Chesterfield or an additional 19 miles to the south through Massachusetts on NH Route 10.

Likewise, a bridge closure would impact the availability of medical services for the residents. The nearest medical facility (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro) serves the entire region. The next nearest medical facility is the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene which is approximately 20 miles to the northeast, 12 miles and 15 minutes further.

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. Nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale commute to Vermont for employment, therefore, the crossing is critical to the quality of life and economic vitality of the region. This project will address regional transportation needs and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region.

The project is consistent with the 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.

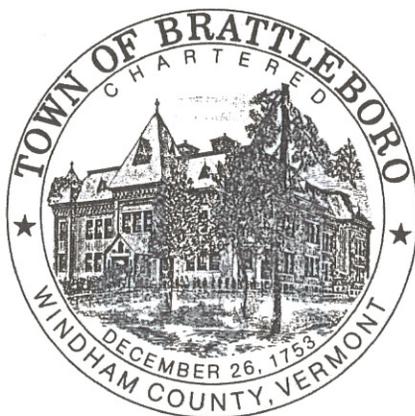
This is a significant investment for the region that would maintain and enhance the quality of life of the area residents and promote economic development. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably.

Sincerely,



Jill Collins
Town Administrator

CC: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT
Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans
Hinsdale Board of Selectmen



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

July 16, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to express enthusiastic support from the Town of Brattleboro for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2018) 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 this 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 an opportunity to generate more value with its investment.

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

The intersection of all of 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.

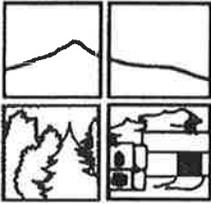
Separate and apart from this bridge project, the Town of Brattleboro and Amtrak are working together to make significant improvements to Brattleboro's Union Station. The objective for Amtrak is a station that achieves full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Amtrak is currently planning a new raised platform, along with other ADA upgrades that will include sidewalks, safety fencing and new lighting. The Town will be making a similar investment within the station building to address ADA issues and renovate this facility to make a statement to Amtrak ridership that you have arrived! The design process is already underway both inside and outside the station. Amtrak project personnel have made contact with electric utility, and one proposal even integrates a transmission line relocation with the bridge project itself. The final design is many months away, but construction is expected to begin in the same timeframe as the bridge project, FY 20.

When all of 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,



Peter B. Elwell
Town Manager



Southwest Region Planning Commission

37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH 03431

603-357-0557 Voice

603-357-7440 Fax

July 17, 2018

Elaine L. Chao, Secretary
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 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 \$25 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and Vermont Agency 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 SWRPC'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. This critical link over the Connecticut River connects two communities, two regions, and two states in everyday activities including employment, commerce, public safety, access to services, etc. 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 highspeed broadband services in communities of both States.

The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge replacement is addressed 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 (NHBMP) 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. 47-8).*

Vermont Yankee Closure Report

In 2015, the Vermont Yankee nuclear facility located in nearby Vernon, VT ceased power generating operations and began closure activities to result in the loss of approximately 600 high-paying jobs. One-third of these jobs, plus the same proportion of nearly 800 largely service-sector jobs as a result of secondary and induced economic impacts, are being felt in Southwest NH resulting in approximately \$35 million in lost wages annually. 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

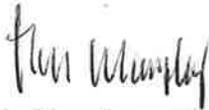
SWRPC has entered into a memorandum of understanding as a commitment to collaboration with its counterparts including Windham Regional Commission (VT) and Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (MA). This Tri-State Partnership endeavors to develop joint strategies in effectively addressing shared 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 certainly a key element.

Please find additional statistics and descriptive information pertinent to the bridge replacement project in the attached addendum 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 commute to Vermont for employment. This crossing is therefore critical to the quality of life, economic well-being, and public safety of the region. The 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, NH DOT
Joseph Flynn, Secretary, VTrans

**NHDOT BUILD Application for Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Replacement Project
Addendum to SWRPC Letter of Support dated July 17, 2018**

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 southeast NH towns (Hinsdale, Winchester, Fitzwilliam, Rindge).

Population Loss (NH Office of Strategic Initiatives, 2016):

- Hinsdale's population is projected to decrease by 2% between 2015 and 2040.

Economic data (NH Department of Employment Security):

- In the last available 10-year period (2006-2015) Hinsdale's annual average labor force has decreased 14%, its number of employed have decreased 15% and its number of unemployed has increased 5%.

Economic data (Community Development Financial Institutions):

- Hinsdale is a federal New Market Tax Credit 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 2006-2010 or (2) Poverty Rate of 20% or greater in the period of 2006-2010.
- Hinsdale is also 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 2006-2010; 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 NHTC's because it is 68.9% of the area median family income.

Economic data (ACS 2015 5 Year Estimates):

- Median HH income: Hinsdale, \$50,217; Cheshire County \$57,782; NH, \$66,779; US, \$53,889
- Median Family income: Hinsdale, \$54,966; Cheshire County \$71,354; NH, \$81,726; US, \$66,011

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 17, 2018

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 \$25 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. This critical link over the Connecticut River connects two communities, two regions, and two states in everyday activities including employment, commerce, public safety, access to services, etc.

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 service centers in the tri-state region in which the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge reconstruction is certainly 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. This crossing is critical to the quality of life, economic well-being, and public safety of the region. 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', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Campany
Executive Director

cc: Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT
Secretary Joseph Flynn, VTrans
Elizabeth McLoughlin, Town of Brattleboro Commissioner to the WRC
Lew Sorenson, WRC Transportation Committee Chair



**Brattleboro Museum
& Art Center**

10 Vernon Street
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July 6, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing in support of the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) 2018 Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$25 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the *Hinsdale, NH - Brattleboro, VT - NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*. This project addresses the needs of two functionally-obsolete truss bridges built in 1926, by bypassing them with a new bridge and converting the historic truss bridges to pedestrian/bike use only.

This project is vitally important to the connectivity, economy, and quality of life of the tri-state region surrounding Brattleboro, Vermont. In addition to ensuring the safety and reliability of a crucial regional thoroughfare connecting rural communities in southwestern New Hampshire to I-91 and the regional economic hub of Brattleboro, the project is essential to the planned \$20 million redevelopment of the area adjacent to the current bridge landing in Vermont -- an effort that is being led by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center and a local housing developer.

The re-routing of automobile traffic over the planned new bridge, conversion of the deteriorated existing bridges to safe pedestrian/bike routes, and associated changes to the adjacent roadways and green spaces are critical to our redevelopment project, which is expected to attract \$15 million in private philanthropy and investment, and to spur significant economic development and quality-of-life improvements in our region.

For this reason, as well as the many others set forth in the accompanying materials, I am pleased to offer my support for New Hampshire Department of Transportation's BUILD grant proposal and hope you will look upon it favorably.

Sincerely,

Daniel Lichtenfeld
Director

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



RESCUE INC.
541 Canal Street, P.O. Box 593
Brattleboro, Vermont 05302

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
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WWW.RESCUEINC.ORG

July 18, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

I strongly support the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD 2018) Transportation Discretionary Grant proposal in the amount of \$25 million submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the “*Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT NH Route 119 Bridge Replacement Project*”. The project addresses the needs of the two functionally-obsolete bridges by bypassing them with a new bridge just south of the 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.

Built in 1926, the Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana Bridges are in deteriorated condition. Due to their age and the harsh northern climate, the deterioration has progressed to the extent that significant rehabilitation or replacement is required. The bypass bridge will remedy this status and the existing historic truss bridges will be rehabilitated and remain open and maintained for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

The 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 to the international trade corridor of Interstate 91 which then connects the region to the Canadian trade market to the north as well as larger New England ports to the south. If the bridge is down-posted or closed, traffic may be detoured an additional 9 miles to the north through NH Route 9 in Chesterfield or an additional 19 miles to the south through Massachusetts on NH Route 10.

Likewise, the nearest medical facility (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro) serves the entire region. The next nearest medical facility is the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene which is approximately 20 miles to the northeast, 12 miles and 15 minutes further.

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. Nearly 50% of the residents of Hinsdale commute to Vermont for employment, therefore, the crossing is critical to the quality of life and economic vitality of the region. This project will address regional

regional transportation needs, and ensure the continued economic vitality of these two communities and the region.

The project is consistent with the 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.

This is a significant investment for the region that would maintain and enhance the quality of life of the area residents and promote economic development. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably.

Sincerely,

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

Drew Hazelton
Chief of Operations
Rescue Inc
(802) 257-7679
office@rescueinc.org

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