

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

June 22, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Chao,

As you review FY 2018 BUILD Grant applications, please give careful consideration to the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project to replace Nielsville Bridge 5767. The bridge was constructed in 1939 to span the Red River and connect Minnesota to North Dakota. It closed indefinitely in 2015 due to structural integrity issues.

During peak harvest, 500 vehicles per day traveled Nielsville Bridge before its closure 24 months ago. Those vehicles are now rerouted a minimum of 11 miles, causing considerable delays and straining the region's rural transportation network and hindering economic activity.

Area businesses have reported a 20-50 percent drop in sales following the bridge closure.

Replacing the bridge would restore a critical economic connection for agriculture, agribusinesses and commerce between the two states.

Additional project benefits consistent with BUILD 2018 goals include:

**Increasing public safety** by restoring mutual aid fire service to the north side of Red River and removing a defunct bridge that poses considerable harm to pedestrians who may unknowingly attempt to cross the failing structure;

**Improving the condition of existing transportation** facilities by adding the bridge and approaches to existing county maintenance routes and improving east-west freight movements;

**Supporting economic competitiveness** by improving access to commerce;

**Improving quality of life** by eliminating a detour that has stalled travel throughout the region for three years; and

**Partnership** by connecting two rural counties who rely on each other for economic sustainability.

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DISTRICT OFFICES

Nielsville Bridge is an important transportation segment to Minnesota and North Dakota. Please give careful review of Polk County's grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Collin C. Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a distinct "P".

Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress