

July 19, 2018

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

RE: Neilsville Bridge Replacement, 2018 BUILD Grant

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to express the support of Halstad Elevator Company for the application submitted by Polk County, MN, and Traill County, ND, on behalf of the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project to the FY 2018 BUILD Grant Program.

The closure of the Nielsville Bridge has severed a critical route between Traill and Polk Counties. This has caused severe problems for 300 to 500 ranchers, farmers, manufacturers, and residents who utilized this critical transportation link on a daily basis.

The continued closure of the bridge is a significant blow to local agriculture, which is the backbone of the local economy. According to the USDA in 2012, Traill County ranks 25<sup>th</sup> in the nation for soybean acreage.

Much of that product makes its way from Traill County to Polk County and State Aid Highway 1 and the shuttered Nielsville bridge were an integral link to this process. The loss of this route has cost producers increased transportation costs and damaged the fluid movement of ag products regionally.

We hope you will review this application and consider the significant cost to local agriculture the loss of the bridge has brought.

We appreciate your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

 Robin H Stone      DM-CEO

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