

June 28, 2019

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

RE: FY 2019 BUILD Grant Program (Rural Application)

Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Bingham Township, North Dakota, I am writing to request your support for a critical bridge replacement project.

Almost three years ago Nielsville Bridge 5767 fell into disrepair and closed indefinitely, causing our township considerable stress and isolation as we rely on commerce, goods, and emergency services in the adjacent community of Nielsville, Minnesota.

Public safety concerns are paramount, as emergency service response times have slowed by 30 minutes since the Nielsville Fire Department can no longer cross the bridge to provide mutual aid to our community.

I am pleading for your help with this difficult situation, as implications are immense. Farmers, ranchers, truck drivers, business owners, employees, families, school teachers, and children are all feeling a huge impact with the bridge closure. As each year of the bridge's closure goes by our community suffers the impacts more and more.

If the 2019 BUILD grant application is successful, funds would be utilized to replace Bridge 5767 and reconstruct 2.5 miles of Polk County State Aid Highway 1 from the best limits of Nielsville, MN to the east abutment of the new proposed bridge to conform to current design standards and bridge alignment. 1,000 feet of Traill County Road 17 will also be reconstructed to match current design standards for the roadway approach to the new bridge. The remaining 9.5 miles of Trail County Road 17 to Trail County Road 81 will be milled and overlaid with bituminous surfacing to strengthen and fix the riding surface of this stretch of the roadway.

The breadth of support for this project is considerable due to the serious widespread disruptions that have occurred since the bridge was abruptly closed in the fall of 2015. Please carefully consider the public and economic benefits of funding this important project.

Sincerely,

Gregory Abentroth, Chairman

David Bjoye, Clerk/Treasurer

Bingham Township

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David Bjoye, Clerk/Treas.