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July 9, 2019

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

Subject: 2019 BUILD Discretionary Grant Program (Rural Application)

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to express my support for Traill County North Dakota and Polk County Minnesota to be considered by the Department of Transportation (DOT) for 2019 BUILD Grant funding to support the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project. This project will replace Nielsville Bridge 5767 that spans the Red River to connect North Dakota and Minnesota.

The bridge, originally constructed in 1939, was indefinitely closed in 2015 due to significant structural integrity issues. During peak harvest, 500 vehicles per day traveled on the Nielsville Bridge. Those vehicles are now detoured at least 11 miles, causing traffic delays and additional strain on the region's existing transportation network. Replacing the bridge would restore a vital economic link for agriculture, agribusiness, and commerce between the two states.

Additional project benefits, consistent with 2019 BUILD goals, include increasing public safety, supporting economic competitiveness, improving quality of life, innovation, and partnership. If successful, \$8,762,500 in federal funds would be combined with a local match of \$3,887,500 to replace the Nielsville Bridge and make necessary improvements to roadway approaches.

I strongly support Traill and Polk Counties in their efforts to replace the Nielsville Bridge to reopen this important transportation artery that connects North Dakota and Minnesota.

Sincerely,


Congressman Kelly Armstrong