

United States Senate

July 1, 2019

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

RE: FY 2019 BUILD Discretionary Grant Program (Rural Application)

Secretary Chao:

As you review fiscal year 2019 BUILD Grant applications, I urge you to give careful consideration of the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project to replace Nielsville Bridge 5767 spanning the Red River to connect the states of North Dakota and Minnesota.

The bridge was constructed in 1939 and indefinitely closed in 2015 due to significant structural integrity issues. During peak harvest when time is valuable, 500 vehicles per day traveled on this bridge. Those vehicles are now detoured a minimum of 11 miles, causing traffic delays and straining the region's existing transportation network.

Replacing the bridge would restore a vital economic link for agriculture and commerce between the two states. Additional project benefits consistent with BUILD 2019 goals described in the application 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.

The Nielsville Bridge is an important transportation infrastructure segment to North Dakota and Minnesota. Your careful review and consideration of this grant application is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator