

July 8, 2019

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

RE: 2019 BUILD Grant Rural Application

Dear Secretary Chao,

As a farmer-owned co-op with five locations in Eastern North Dakota, we are writing in support of the FY 2019 BUILD Grant application for the Nielsville Bridge replacement project from Traill County, North Dakota and the adjacent Polk County, Minnesota.

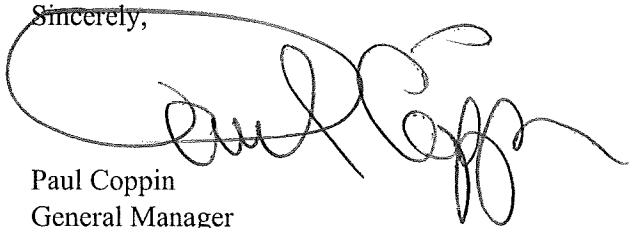
The closure of the Nielsville Bridge has severed a critical route between Traill and Polk Counties. This has caused severe problems for 300 to 500 ranchers, farmers, manufacturers, and residents who utilized this critical transportation link on a daily basis.

The bridge has been closed for nearly four years, causing drivers to be rerouted a minimum of 11 miles, causing delays, straining the region's rural transportation network, and stifling economic activity. Area businesses report a 20-50 percent drop in revenue following the bridge closure.

If Polk County's 2019 BUILD Grant application is successful, federal funds would be leveraged with non-federal matching funds to replace Nielsville Bridge and return economic vitality to the region. Funds will be used to replace the bridge and modernize roadway approaches to support commercial activity in two rural states.

For the above stated reasons, please give careful review of Polk County's 2019 BUILD Grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Coppin", written over a large, light-colored oval scribble.

Paul Coppin  
General Manager  
Valley United Cooperative  
322 4<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Reynolds, ND 58275