

AMY KLOBUCHAR  
MINNESOTA

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

July 1, 2019

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

RE: Polk County, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant Program

Dear Secretary Chao:

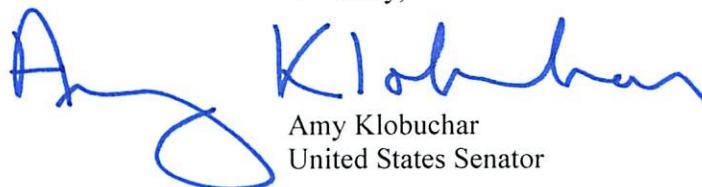
I am writing in support of Polk County's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program. If awarded, the funding would be used to support the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project, linking Minnesota and North Dakota by reopening a major bridge crossing over the Red River.

The Nielsville Bridge was constructed in 1939 and connected Polk County, Minnesota and Trail County, North Dakota. It closed in 2015 due to safety concerns and has left a major gap in the transportation network throughout the region. Farmers, manufacturers, and small businesses that rely on the bridge to ship their products or accommodate visitors to their shops have reported losing between 20 and 50 percent of revenues since the bridge's closure. Equally concerning are the increased response times of local law enforcement and emergency response agencies that rely on the bridge to get between calls for assistance. This bridge is a critical piece of the region's wellbeing.

Funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation would be supplemented with a local match of \$3,887,500 to replace the Nielsville Bridge and make necessary improvements to roadway approaches. In 2018, the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project BUILD Grant application was classified in the highest tier of applications with a ranking of *highly rated*, and was in the top 250 applications submitted. If approved, the new bridge and roadway would serve over 300 vehicles per day and restore a critical connection for farmers, local businesses, and first responders in the region.

Again, I support Polk County's application for funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development grant. If you have any questions, please contact Rommel Lee in my Minnesota office at (612) 727-5220 or by email at [Rommel\\_Lee@Klobuchar.senate.gov](mailto:Rommel_Lee@Klobuchar.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator