

March 5, 2020

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

To whom it may concern,

This is a letter of support to secure funding for the replacement of the bridge that traverses the Red River of the North between Buxton, ND and Nielsville, MN (the Nielsville Bridge). Shareholders of American Crystal Sugar Company rely on the Nielsville Bridge to maintain profitable margins in their on-farm operations as well as for the cooperative. Without the ability to cross the Red River from North Dakota into Nielsville, the on-farm transportation costs for delivering sugarbeets to the Nielsville, MN receiving station during the harvest operation increase substantially for some of the American Crystal Sugar Company shareholders. Our best estimate for the annual incremental trucking costs to our shareholders during harvest is \$35,000 per year. Over the three years of the bridge being closed this is approximately \$105,000.

The closure of this bridge continues to cause economic interference and increased costs for businesses, ranches, farms, and processors along the Red River.

Likewise, the Nielsville Bridge is used by our contract hauler, Transysystems, when they haul sugarbeets from our Nielsville, MN receiving station and our Scandia, MN receiving station to our Hillsboro, ND processing facility. The use of this bridge has allowed them to minimize turn-around time and maximize safety between the Nielsville and Scandia receiving stations and the Hillsboro factory. Our estimate for the additional transportation costs for Transystem is \$75,000 per year. Over the three years of the bridge being closed this is approximately \$225,000. These extra costs are passed on to American Crystal Sugar Company and ultimately reduce our shareholder's beet payment and on-farm profits. Not having the Nielsville Bridge also creates an additional 10,000 truck trips through the towns of Shelly, Halstad, and Hillsboro.

The safety of drivers is always a concern for our shareholders, their employees, and our employees. During the harvest of the sugarbeet crop, farmers and their employees are working around the clock. Minimizing the travel distance between the grower's fields and the American Crystal sugarbeet receiving stations decrease the total number of trucks required to complete the harvest as well as the overall time spent on the road. Without the Nielsville Bridge, some of our shareholders will need to increase their truck allotment and the total number of employees needed to operate these vehicles to get their crop to market. The availability of qualified drivers in this area is in high demand during the sugarbeet harvest, thereby making it extremely difficult to hire and maintain an adequate workforce. If growers have the good fortune to find additional employees and equipment, putting more vehicles on the road and increasing the length of travel at this time of year increases the chances of vehicular crashes and the potential for serious injury. The other alternative is for our shareholders and their employees to work longer hours with less equipment, which increases the fatigue of the operators. In this case, accidents and the potential for serious injury in the field and on the road can be expected due to the longer hours worked.

Several of the American Crystal Sugar Company employees that work at the Hillsboro, ND processing facility live in Minnesota, and some have relied on the Nielsville Bridge to make their way safely to work and back home again. Without this bridge, additional travel time and an increase in the distance needed to get to work is required, which costs these employees more money for fuel and gives them less disposable income. In addition, traffic on other roads and bridges has increased due to the closure of the Nielsville Bridge, meaning more head-to-head traffic, again increasing the chance of vehicle crashes and the potential for serious injury.

It is our hope that the Traill County Commission, the Polk County Commission, the states of North Dakota and Minnesota, and the federal government are able to secure the necessary funding to replace the bridge that traverses the Red River of the North between Buxton, ND and Nielsville, MN.

I'll be glad to provide any other information that would help in this matter, so please feel free to contact me with any further questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ingulsrud", written in a cursive style.

Brian Ingulsrud
Vice President of Agriculture
American Crystal Sugar Company