

March 6, 2020

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

RE: FY 2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Transportation Discretionary Grants application

Secretary Chao,

The City of Nielsville strongly supports the request by Polk & Traill Counties for 2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants funding for the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project.

If awarded, the 2020 BUILD Grant would fund the replacement of Nielsville Bridge 5767, which was closed in 2015 due to structural issues and public safety concerns.

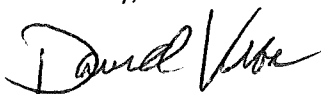
The sentiment of angst and urgency in our community is reaching distressing levels. For three years now, 300-500 drivers have been required to detour daily. Emergency response times have had documented delays of up to 30 minutes—putting lives, homes, and businesses at risk. Economic activity plummeted due to geographic isolation and lack of commercial connectivity. Area businesses have seen a 20-50 percent reduction in sales due to the inaccessibility between Nielsville and neighboring Traill County in North Dakota.

The project will restore regional mobility, decrease travel times, increase public safety, and reestablish an integral transportation link to serve North Dakota and Minnesota and support the regional and national economy.

The level of support for this project is extensive and crosses state lines due to the economic devastation and public outcry that has occurred in the region since the bridge closure. As a community we continue to seek solutions to reopen this vital economic route and ask for your assistance.

Please do what you can to help our region recover from this significant infrastructure loss.

Sincerely,



David Vraa

Mayor, City of Nielsville

PO Box 5, Nielsville, MN 56568