

March 6, 2020

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

SUBJECT: FY 2020 BUILD Discretionary Grant Program

The Nielsville Fire Department would like to extend our support for the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project being proposed by Polk County, Minnesota and Traill County, North Dakota. Keeping people out of harm's way is our priority, and a new bridge would help continue that service to our friends and neighbors.

The closure of Nielsville Bridge has limited our ability to respond to calls across the Red River of the North. Before the closing of the Nielsville Bridge, we were just two miles away from calls across the river, allowing us to respond in the fastest way possible. We have provided our response times in which demonstrate our reliance on the bridge. Those residents on the other side of the bridge now are without timely first response with the closest fire department in Buxton being 25 miles away.

The replacement of the bridge and fixing adjacent roadway is necessary for the safety and well being of the residents of Polk County and Traill County. It will enhance the fire and emergency routes, making a more direct route to the residents and provide a more reliable transportation route.

Losing this crossing has been a significant issue for the local area. As of now, residents are required to take a detour that is 11 miles out of the way and the route is mostly on gravel roads that cannot handle the flow of traffic. A new bridge will provide a safe and direct route for emergency vehicles to get to residents in Traill County in a timely manner and a more efficient and safe route for people to use.

The Nielsville Fire Department supports the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project, and we hope that you will see the importance of this project as well.

Sincerely,

The Nielsville Fire Department

