

AMY KLOBUCHAR
MINNESOTA

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
United States Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, DC 20590

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

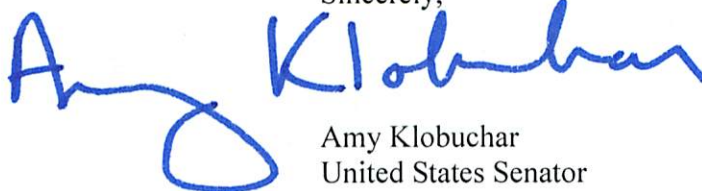
I am writing in support of Polk County's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Program. If awarded, the funding would be used to support the Multi-State Regional Connectivity Project, reconstructing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

Built in 1939, the Nielsville Bridge was essential to connecting Minnesota and North Dakota. In 2015, the bridge was closed due to safety concerns, which has left a major gap in the transportation network throughout the region. Farmers, manufacturers, and small businesses all relied on the bridge to ship their products and the regional commercial sector has lost up to 50 percent of its revenue 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.

Funding from the BUILD Program would be supplemented with a local match of \$3,887,500 to replace the Nielsville Bridge and make necessary improvements to approach roads. 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 500 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 Program. 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.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator