

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Schatz, and Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Bill, we urge you to support critical investments in our nation's transportation network by providing \$2 billion for the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Bridge Investment Program (BIP) as authorized in the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* (BIL).

There are over 42,000 bridges across the country in "poor" condition, and 304,000 additional bridges in "fair" condition at risk of deteriorating. The condition of our nation's bridges has a direct effect on our economy. More than 55 million tons of freight worth over \$49 billion moves through our national freight transportation system every day, including on highways and across bridges. Projects funded through the BIP will improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges, by, among other things, shortening travel times, lowering transportation costs, and reducing long-term maintenance costs.

The American Society of Engineers, which publishes a Report Card for American Infrastructure every four years, found that underinvestment in infrastructure could cost American households and businesses nearly \$2 trillion over 20 years, or as much as \$625 per household per year.¹ When it comes to our bridges, the most recent Conditions and Performance report from the Federal Highway Administration found that the US had a \$131.8 billion backlog for repairs for existing bridges as of 2016.²

Through the BIL, Congress made the single largest dedicated investment in our Nation's bridges since the construction of the Interstate Highway System. The BIL invested \$12.5 billion in the BIP over 5 years, and so far, the Department has distributed \$2.4 billion for 37 projects across 22 states, including 23 planning grants. Despite the historic funding in the BIL, only 4 percent of BIP construction projects that applied in 2022 were funded and a quarter of applications for planning funds were awarded. Out of the 397 total applicants to BIP in 2022, less than 10 percent were awarded.

¹ American Society of Civil Engineers, "Failure to Act: Current Investment Trends in our Surface Transportation Infrastructure" 2021. P. 21. <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/failure-to-act-2021-surface-transportation.pdf>

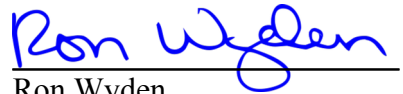
² U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance Report to Congress, 24th Edition (Washington, DC: 2021). <https://doi.org/10.21949/1521794>.

The BIP's planning grants are designed to create a pipeline of construction ready projects eligible for future funding, and the dedicated funding for bridge projects over \$100 million will ensure that large projects are seen through to completion. To fulfill the goals of the BIP and to reduce our backlog of critical bridge projects, we must continue to support this important program. Thank you for your continued support for this program which benefits our economy and improves the safety and resiliency of our transportation network.

Sincerely,



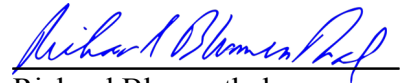
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



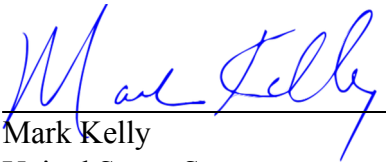
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



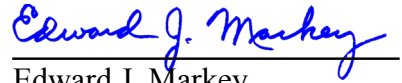
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



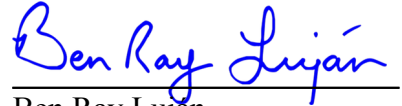
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
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Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator