

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 8, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: CTDOT Gold Star Memorial Bridge Northbound Structure Rehabilitation Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We are pleased to write to you today in strong support for the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) proposal for the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Bridge Investment Program (BIP) under the Large Bridge category. With eleven lanes, nearly six thousand feet of length, and more than one million square feet of deck area, the Gold Star Memorial Bridge is the largest bridge structure in the state of Connecticut. The northbound span of the bridge was completed in 1943, with the southbound span to follow in 1973. Linking New London and Groton, two major port cities in Connecticut's robust blue economy, the bridge sees an average of 117,000 vehicles daily.

Since its initial construction, the Gold Star Memorial Bridge has experienced significant deterioration on the northbound span. Although intermittent maintenance has been performed since, CTDOT's last major rehabilitation of the Gold Star Memorial Bridge took place in the 1970s. This deterioration has resulted in heavier vehicles that require permitting—such as fully-loaded dump trucks—being instructed to avoid crossing the bridge and instead take a seventeen-mile detour, significantly extending travel time. The Department estimates additional vehicle limitations will be necessary by 2033 without significant rehabilitation. In order to remediate its current poor condition, CTDOT has developed a three-stage rehabilitation plan: Phase 1A (strengthening and improving the condition of the truss spans), Phase 1B (strengthening and improving the girder spans), and Phase 2 (replacement of the bridge deck, among other improvements). Phase 1A construction began in Spring 2022 and is anticipated to be completed in June 2025.

CTDOT is requesting \$158.2 million in BIP Large Bridge funding to assist the state in accelerating completion of Phase 1B and the launching of Phase 2. The Department will use any awarded BIP funds to accelerate repairs on an aggressive schedule to avoid additional vehicle restrictions. The project also includes upgrades to a multi-use path that will benefit active transportation users and connect two distressed municipalities, the Naval Submarine Base, and the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed into law to move forward large, nationally significant projects like this one. This project supports the establishing goals of the

BIP grant program-namely ensuring a state of good repair, improving safety, facilitating the movement of freight and workers, reducing greenhouse gas emissions related to traffic congestion, and improving the quality of life for residents of New London, Groton, and the surrounding communities.

We are proud to support this important project and urge your fair and full consideration of the Connecticut Department of Transportation's application.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH D. COURTNEY
Member of Congress



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
U.S. Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
U.S. Senate