

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As you evaluate transportation needs across the country and prepare to implement expected legislation to address America's transportation infrastructure needs, I urge you to support strong funding for bridge repair and restoration. I also respectfully request that you consider the critical transportation infrastructure needs in Minnesota to ensure that local communities are able to travel safely and efficiently.

The American Society of Civil Engineers' recent report card gave America's infrastructure a grade of "C-minus" and identified over 46,000 bridges in poor condition across the country.¹ A recent report from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) found that over 600 bridges in Minnesota are in poor condition.² Minnesotans will never forget the day when the I-35W bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River, taking the lives of thirteen people and injuring many more. In the wake of that tragedy, Minnesotans joined together to support the families of the victims and the survivors. The collapse of I-35W remains a tragic reminder of what can happen if we fail to maintain public infrastructure, especially our bridges.

While safety is always the primary concern associated with bridges in poor condition, decrepit bridges also increase expenses for Americans. Our deficient infrastructure is estimated to cost each household an average of \$3,300 a year in added fuel costs and car repairs.³ Meanwhile, the National Association of Manufacturers estimates that infrastructure investments yield returns of \$3 for every \$1 invested, demonstrating the efficiency of strong investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure.⁴

¹ American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). (2021, March 3). *2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure: Bridge Report*. Retrieved from: <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Bridges-2021.pdf>.

² Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). (2019, 31 Dec.). *Bridge Condition by Highway System 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/no10/condition19.cfm>.

³ American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). (2021, Feb. 3). *2021 Report: Economic Impacts of Status Quo Investment Across Infrastructure Systems*. Retrieved from: <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/the-impact/failure-to-act-report/>.

⁴ National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). (2014, Sept.). *Catching Up: Greater Focus Needed to Achieve a More Competitive Infrastructure*. Retrieved from: https://www.supplychain247.com/images/pdfs/NAM_Infrastructure_Full_Report_2014.pdf

The U.S. Department of Transportation provides critical funding for infrastructure projects throughout the state and around the country. Yet many local communities find themselves competing with their neighbors to raise necessary matching funds or make difficult spending trade-offs in the face of competing priorities that now include a costly pandemic. In this context, direct investment in transportation infrastructure, particularly our bridges, will play a critical role in ensuring our local communities can thrive. We now have an opportunity to do just that.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I have included with this letter a map illustrating the large number of Minnesota highway bridges in critical need of repair.⁵ I look forward to continuing to work with you to invest in our transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

⁵ Congressional Research Service (CRS). (2021 Feb. 24). *Map of Minnesota Highway Bridges Rated in Poor Condition*. Data Retrieved from: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/no10/condition19.cfm>.

**Map of Minnesota Highway Bridges Rated in Poor Condition (631),
Congressional Research Service (CRS):**

