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MINNESOTA

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 7, 2023

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

RE: Minnesota Department of Transportation, National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:


I write in support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program. If awarded, funding would support the Blatnik Bridge Reconstruction Project, which would replace or rehabilitate the Blatnik Bridge in northeastern Minnesota.

Located over St. Louis Bay on Lake Superior, the Blatnik Bridge is one of two bridges that connects the cities of Duluth, Minnesota with Superior, Wisconsin. The Bridge carries Interstate Highway 535 and over 33,000 vehicles per day. It is essential for freight movement and commercial traffic for not only the Twin Ports of Duluth and Superior, but also for the entire Upper Midwest region. Many businesses and industries in the region rely on the bridge because the port is a vital shipping center, and countless commuters, students, and workers use the bridge too. The Port of Duluth-Superior is also the largest U.S. port on the Great Lakes and one of the largest marine gateways for U.S. trade with Canada, the top trade partner of Minnesota and the United States.

However, the bridge is over sixty years old, and in poor condition with significant structural deterioration; creating serious capacity, mobility, and safety concerns. Funding from the DOT would be used to replace or rehabilitate the Blatnik Bridge. Specifically, the project would replace all structural elements of the bridge, address safety concerns at bridge interchanges, and restore the bridge to its original operational condition; improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the key regional connection. Completing this project would support the needs of Minnesotans by improving and modernizing the regional transportation network in northeast Minnesota.

Again, I support the Minnesota Department of Transportation's application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program. If you have any questions, please contact Rommel Lee in my Minneapolis office at (612) 727-5220 or by email at Rommel_Lee@Klobuchar.senate.gov.

Sincerely,


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator