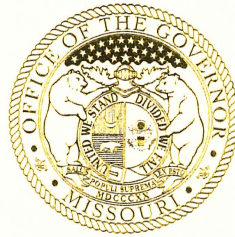


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Michael L. Parson

GOVERNOR
STATE OF MISSOURI

March 4, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to strongly express my support of the Missouri Department of Transportation's application for a federal INFRA Grant to replace the Interstate 70 Bridge over the Missouri River at Rocheport.

Missouri has one of the largest highway systems in the country, and since it sits at the nexus of east and west, this system receives a great deal of strain. The Rocheport I-70 Bridge is a perfect example of that, spanning the Missouri River in the very center of the state. The bridge is a critical linchpin on the I-70 corridor that is a vital part of the regional and national freight transportation system, carrying 12.5 million vehicles per year, including 3.6 million trucks.

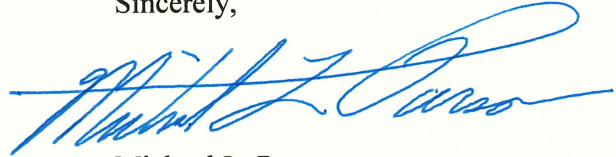
MoDOT has done an excellent job maintaining Missouri's network of roads and bridges—many intended to carry freight volumes of national significance—using one of the lowest levels of funding in the country, but Missouri cannot accomplish this task alone. This project presents a unique opportunity for collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation in creating a new bridge that will last 100 years, while also averting the negative traffic impacts associated with a rehabilitation that would require nine to 12 months of lane closures. A replacement of the bridge, using the credit enhancement tools of the Build America Bureau, such as the Rural Project Initiative, would present a much stronger investment for the State of Missouri and the Interstate Highway System's national network.

If rehabilitated instead of rebuilt this coming year, the Rocheport work zones will cause backups of 8-25 miles in each direction, and traffic delays of up to eight hours, paralyzing Central Missouri and nationwide freight shipments. Avoiding the bridge would mean taking a 100-mile detour that would greatly increase road user costs and cause significant freight disruption. Local road systems would experience increased traffic congestion and damage.

Missouri's strategic location at the transportation crossroads of the United States puts our highways within 500 miles of 43 percent of the U.S. population, 44 percent of all U.S. manufacturing plants, and seven of the top 25 international cargo hubs in the U.S. Missouri is also home to the country's second and third largest freight rail hubs in Kansas City and St. Louis, respectively. Maintaining the direct connectivity of Missouri's two largest cities via I-70 across the heart of the state will benefit not only Missouri and the Midwest region, but the entire nation by enhancing the safety, capacity, and reliability of this critical freight corridor. A new parallel structure on new alignment—made possible only through this requested INFRA grant—would avoid the pain that's certain to come with the rehab project, and would ensure freight mobility through central Missouri for the next 100 years.

Given the many public benefits associated with this project, I urge you to support this grant. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you on this and other opportunities to solve transportation needs across Missouri.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Parson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael L. Parson
Governor