

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

We are writing in support of the proposal led by the University of Maine (UMaine) to form a University Transportation Center called the *Transportation Infrastructure Durability Center (TIDC)* in Standard Federal Region 1. In partnership with the University of Rhode Island, University of Connecticut, University of Massachusetts Lowell, University of Vermont, and Western New England University, UMaine's proposal titled "Transportation Infrastructure Durability Center: Extending the Life of Our Transportation Assets" aims to help save taxpayer dollars by making bridges, roads, and rail last longer.

New England's transportation infrastructure faces unique challenges due to harsh winter weather and short construction seasons. Poor road conditions in New England states, on average, cost each motorist \$584 per person annually. The TIDC seeks to ensure efficiency and maximization of investment in transportation infrastructure by: (1) developing improved monitoring and assessment tools; (2) strengthening existing bridges; (3) using new materials and systems to extend life and accelerate construction; and (4) using new connectivity tools to enhance asset and performance management while promoting workforce development.

If selected, the TIDC would strengthen and augment state Departments of Transportation (DOT) research programs, New England Transportation Consortium (NETC) activities, and national research efforts. The project would establish an advisory board comprised of DOT representatives from all New England states, the President of AASHTO, and the President of the American Society of Civil Engineer's Transportation and Development Institute, to pursue research projects that solve the states' most pressing transportation infrastructure durability needs. The TIDC would harness the experience of twenty-eight faculty and two-hundred and eighty student researchers in order to focus on real infrastructure needs and utilize existing transportation assets to ensure cost-effectiveness.

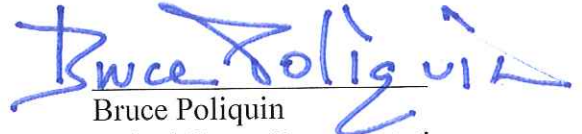
Member universities of the TIDC have an extensive record of accomplishments in transportation infrastructure research, education, and technology transfer. In addition, the UMaine Advanced Structures and Composites Center is a world renowned civil infrastructure laboratory with a long track record of innovation, including being named a White House Transportation Champion of Change in 2015.

Thank you for your time and effort on behalf of the University of Maine and its partnering New England universities. We urge your careful consideration of this application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please contact our staff should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
United States Representative



Bruce Poliquin
United States Representative



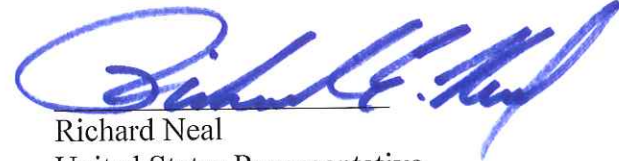
James Langevin
United States Representative



Joe Courtney
United States Representative



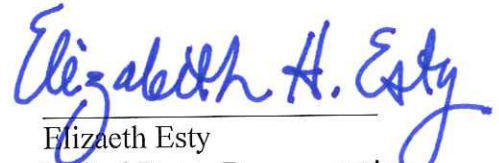
Rosa DeLauro
United States Representative



Richard Neal
United States Representative



Niki Tsongas
United States Representative



Elizabeth Esty
United States Representative