

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 9, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

We are pleased to provide this letter in support of the National Park Service's (NPS) Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant application for the Arlington Memorial Bridge Reconstruction Project. As you know, the bridge spans the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., connecting Northern Virginia with the District of Columbia. It is not only a national memorial, but a critical multimodal link in the national capital region's transportation network.

We appreciate the U.S. Department of Transportation's commitment to this project and previous award of a \$90 million grant to enable major construction activities to begin. Unfortunately, the grant and associated matching funds will not cover the full \$250 million needed for repairs. Without the remaining balance of \$60 million, the construction schedule could be prolonged, raising the potential of increased travel delays and continual ad hoc repairs until the bridge would ultimately need to be completely closed by 2030, or sooner.

Arlington Memorial Bridge is structurally deficient and its poor condition has already begun to significantly constrain regional movement. In May of 2015, NPS suddenly closed portions of two lanes for emergency repairs. Without a major overhaul the bridge will be closed to all vehicle traffic by 2021. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments projects a full bridge closure would cost the region \$75.4 million per year in traffic delays alone. Traffic diversions would also put even more strain on already crowded nearby bridges.

The bridge carries 68,000 vehicles per day, which is one of the highest volumes for any one bridge administered by NPS. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) engineering evaluations have demonstrated the Arlington Memorial Bridge is the worst condition of all high-volume urban federally-owned bridges in the country. Given the bridge's state of disrepair, historical significance, traffic volume, and overall size, it is estimated that it is the most costly identified federally-owned bridge rehabilitation project across the country.

Arlington Memorial Bridge is also entirely owned by the federal government, under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. State governments have no legal obligation to provide financial support for maintenance of the bridge. Therefore, without significant federal investment, a project of this magnitude poses a nearly impossible challenge to NPS's transportation budget. A weight limit, which disrupts freight flows in the region, has already been instituted for Arlington Memorial Bridge. Closing the bridge entirely would have a

cascading effect on all modes of transportation within the region. Finally, it is important to note that the bridge serves as a designated emergency route which would support the evacuation of over one million people in the event of a threat to the seat of government.

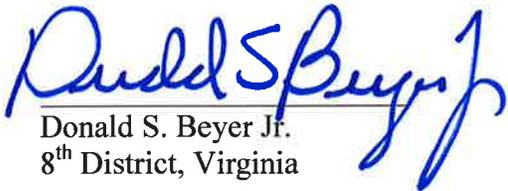
The Arlington Memorial Bridge Reconstruction Project would completely rehabilitate Arlington Memorial Bridge, protecting its memorial character while improving safety and preventing disruption to freight flows on other Potomac River crossings. The project supports the Department of Transportation's emphasis on economic growth; transportation safety; and federal, state and local partnerships; and is an outstanding example of regional cooperation. It also reflects the calls for addressing infrastructure bottlenecks and improving safety in your department's *National Freight Strategic Plan*.

For these reasons, we enthusiastically support the NPS's FASTLANE grant application for the remaining funding required to repair and preserve Arlington Memorial Bridge.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact our offices.

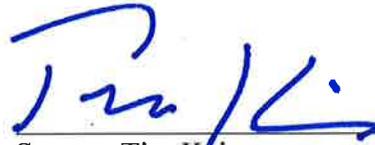
Sincerely,

Sincerely,

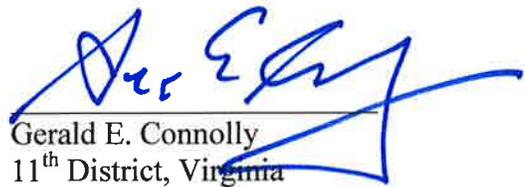

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