

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in strong support of the application submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for a \$20 million grant from 2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant (RAISE 2023) Discretionary Grant Program. Federal aid from RAISE 2023 would fund the replacement of the structurally-deficient General Sullivan Bridge (GSB) with a new superstructure that addresses the needs of the community and supports the regional economy.

The existing GSB initially served as a primary route for vehicles traveling from the City of Portsmouth and Interstate-95 to the mountains and lakes of New Hampshire and Maine. After accommodating traffic for fifty years, the GSB became a bridge dedicated to non-motorized use by pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Little Bay for both commuting and recreation. An adjacent bridge – the Little Bay Bridge – was constructed in 1984 and currently handles interstate vehicular traffic on a high-speed, eight lane-wide structure. This is a critical crossing because the other available routes are significantly longer and more time-consuming.

The GSB was closed completely in 2018 due to continued deterioration from its age and location in a harsh coastal climate. To accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic, a temporary crossing was created using a lane from the northbound Little Bay turnpike bridge. Superstructure replacement of the GSB would not only address deficiencies, but also provide more multimodal amenities for travelers. Furthermore, a new bridge would offer transportation access to cyclists and pedestrians over Little Bay and provide a slight increase in navigational clearance for marine users.

This new proposed bridge is a nine-span, fixed-structure, two-girder system with a total length of 1550.5 feet that includes a new Newington abutment behind the existing abutment. It is comprised of two steel girders with a concrete deck that carries a 12-foot multi-use path with 3-foot-wide minimum shoulders across Little Bay. This shoulder width would accommodate the many fishermen users as well as tourists who often stop to view the beautiful scenery from the crossing.

This reopening of a dedicated pedestrian/bicycle path would provide directional connections between desired locations for commuters, recreational users, and tourists in the seacoast region.

The enhanced bridge would also improve safety by separating bicyclists and pedestrians from the Little Bay Bridge vehicular traffic, decrease greenhouse gas emissions by reducing reliance on automobiles, improve quality of life and equity serving diverse users and enhance mobility through new regional bicycle path and trail networks for commuters and leisure travelers and connections to significant destinations.

This project enjoys enthusiastic support from area stakeholders and appears in New Hampshire's approved Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan. It represents a significant investment for the region that would maintain and enhance the quality of life for area residents and visitors and ensure the continued economic vitality of the communities of Dover, Somersworth, Rochester, Newington, and Portsmouth, NH. I am pleased to offer my support for this application and hope you will look upon it favorably. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jon Jarvis in my office at 603-647-7500.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Shaheen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeanne" and last name "Shaheen" clearly distinguishable.

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

CC: Commissioner William Cass, NHDOT